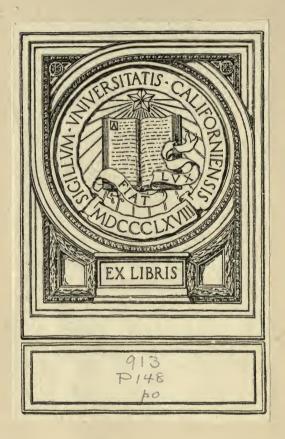
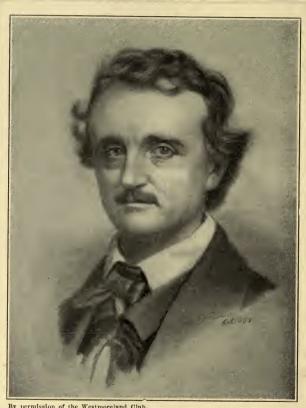


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EDGAR ALLAN POE

## POETS OF VIRGINIA

By

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A History of Education, History of English Literature,
Introduction to American Literature, Poets of
the South, Guide to Literary
Criticism, etc.





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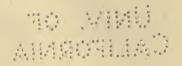
ATLANTA

RICHMOND

DALLAS

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#### PREFACE

The present work is intended to be a comprehensive study of the poets of Virginia. By that phrase the author means to designate such writers as have published one or more volumes of verse. Only in two or three cases—such as John Esten Cooke and John R. Thompson—has this rule been disregarded. No author of a volume of verse has been intentionally omitted.

The facts here presented will be a revelation to many persons, even to those who are well informed in literary matters. There are few who knew or would have supposed that more than a hundred men and women of the Old Dominion had published volumes of poetry. This surprise will undoubtedly be increased, when the variety and excellence of much of this poetry is understood. As a whole it is notable for its elevation of thought and purity of sentiment; and from beginning to end there is scarcely a line that would bring a blush to the cheek of modesty itself.

In his study of the various volumes that came under review, the author has had to assume the rôle of critic. While trying to be faithful to the integrity that should characterize a literary historian, he has constantly sought out what was best. His attitude has been one of friendliness; and though he has pointed out defects, where such a course seemed necessary to a fair estimate of a writer, his severity has in all cases been tempered by mercy. In more than one case he has deeply felt the pathos of a real poetic talent struggling under irremediable limitations.

There has been one feature of the author's work that has brought him peculiar pleasure. In most of the poets that have come under review, he has been able to discover something which for felicity of thought or expression has been worth reproducing and preserving. In a waste of platitude he has sometimes found a gem. In this way the present volume has in some sense assumed the character of an anthology, which, it is hoped, will be found full of interest.

The stream of poetry, since the days of the redoubtable Captain John Smith, has never run entirely dry in Virginia. The poetic impulse has steadily followed the development of the State, and reflected its physical features, its growing intelligence, and its political history. This fact gives a special importance to the present volume; for it is not simply a record of individual verse-writers, but, in part at least, a culture-history of the State.

In his treatment the author has followed a chronological order, which has been fixed by the date of publication of the successive volumes of verse. Upon the whole this has seemed the most satisfactory arrangement, though in several cases of posthumous publications it has necessitated the transfer of the poet from his proper place. The facts presented in the introduction to each period will, it is hoped, throw more or less light on the distinctive character of its poetry.

In the appendix will be found the full titles of the various works that have formed the basis of this study. The author has made a reasonably careful examination of each one. This investigation, which has been very pleasant, has extended over several years as opportunity presented. While a majority of the books listed may be found in the Library of Congress and the State Library at Richmond, the collections there are very far from being complete. A few private collections have been helpful; and the Harris Collection of American Poetry at Brown University supplied several volumes not elsewhere to be found. To all who have generously assisted the author in his researches, he feels deeply grateful.

In conclusion, the author would express the hope that his work will be regarded as worth the doing. He offers it as a contribution to the literary history, not only of Virginia, but of the United States. It seems fitting that it should appear at the time when the State and the nation are celebrating the tercentenary of the settlement at Jamestown.

Roanoke College, Salem, Va.

F. V. N. PAINTER.

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### POETS OF VIRGINIA

Ι

#### The Colonial Period

CHAPTER I

#### The Beginnings

American literature had its beginning at Jamestown. While the colonists, amid toils, dangers, and sufferings, were making history, there were writers among them to record it. In many cases the hand that wielded the sword was equally skilful in guiding the pen. Cæsar was not the only man who could at the same time make and write history.

The explanation of this early rise of literature is not far to seek. Whatever may have been the character of some of the colonists, the leading spirits among them were animated with great, uplifting purposes. They breathed the spacious atmosphere belonging to the age of Elizabeth, and were in some measure conscious of the mighty work they were beginning. In a spirit of loyalty they sought to add a new realm to the English crown; and in a spirit of Christian zeal they desired to convert the natives.

It will be readily understood that the first writers, for the most part, did not aim at artistic literature. Their literary aims were chiefly practical. They were less concerned about the form than about the matter of their writing. They were anxious to make known their experiences, their discoveries, and their necessities to the mother country, from which further supplies of men and money were to come; at the same time,

they no doubt found a natural pleasure in describing the beauties and wonders of the new world.

John Smith.—The first writings of the colonists were naturally in prose. In 1608, the year following the establishment of the colony at Jamestown, appeared Captain John Smith's True Relation of such Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as hath Happened in Virginia since the first Planting of the Colony. It recounts with simple directness the incidents of his capture by the Indians as he was exploring the Chickahominy. Of other prose writers—Percy, Strachey, Porey—it is not necessary to speak.

It is noteworthy that these writers of prose were not invincibly prosaic. They felt the influence of the splendid literary era associated with the name of Elizabeth—an era that gave Spenser, Shakespeare, and Ben Johnson to the world. They were not indifferent to the charms of poetic thought and expression. As we look over Smith's *History of Virginia*, which appeared in 1626, it is interesting to note how the various writers who contributed to that work, round out their stories with a stanza of poetry.

The brave, enterprising, and practical Smith himself was not without poetic impulses and poetic culture. He embellishes his narrative in the *General History* with frequent snatches of verse. He thus describes, for instance, his condition among the Indians after his rescue by Pocahontas—a romantic incident suspiciously lacking in the *True Relation*:—

"They say, he bore a pleasant shew; But sure his heart was sad. For who can pleasant be, and rest, That lives in fear and dread; And having life suspected, doth It still suspected lead?"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Suspected here has the sense of uncertain, doubtful.

Many of the poetic snatches used in the General History to enforce a moral or adorn a truth, seem to be original, bursting forth spontaneously from the fertile brain of the author. The suggestion of a rhyme appears to have been a seductive allurement. However this may be, we find in a later work, Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England, or Anywhere, printed in 1631, a brief poem that is not without merit. It justifies us in claiming the wise and energetic leader of the Virginia colony as a poet. The poem is entitled The Sea Mark, and gives voice to a vessel that has suffered wreck through the carelessness born of over-confidence. It consists of three stanzas as follows:—

"Aloof, aloof, and come not near!
The dangers do appear
Which, if my ruin had not been,
You had not seen:
I only lie upon this shelf
To be a mark to all
Which on the same might fall,
That none may perish but myself.

"If in or outward you be bound,
Do not forget to sound;
Neglect of that was cause of this
To steer amiss.
The seas were calm, the wind was fair;
That made me so secure,
That now I must endure
All weathers, be they foul or fair.

"The winter's cold, the summer's heat,
Alternately beat
Upon my bruised sides that rue,
Because too true,
That no relief can ever come.
But why should I despair,
Being promised so fair
That there shall be a day of Doom."

R. Rich.—The first American poem has a very early date. In 1610 R. Rich, "a soldier blunt and plaine," published A Ballad of Virginia, celebrating "the happy arrivall of that famous and worthy knight Sir Thomas Gates and well reputed and valiante Captaine Newport into England." It is prefaced with an interesting address to the reader, in which the author says that he was influenced by artistic rather than by mercenary motives. "Thou dost peradventure imagine," he says, "that I am mercenarie in this business and write for money (as your moderne Poets use) hired by some of those ever to be admired adventurers to flatter the world. No, I disclaime it."

The poem consists of twenty-two stanzas of four lines each, and exhibits considerable facility in versification. It is chiefly descriptive; and the absence of high imagination and of delicate sensibility renders it rather prosaic. The author is mostly concerned about the facts; and having himself passed through the scenes portrayed, he is sometimes more definite than dignified in his statement of incident. He belonged to the expedition which sailed from England in 1609 under the command of Newport, and suffered shipwreck in a hurricane on the Bermuda islands.

"The seas did rage, the windes did blow, distressed were they then; Their ship did leake. her tacklings breake, in daunger were her men.

But Heaven was pylotte in this storm, and to an iland nere, Bermoothawes call'd, conducted then, which did abate their feare.

"But yet these worthies forced were, opprest with weather againe,
To runne their ship between two rockes, where she doth still
remaine;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>But a single copy of the original is known to exist. It has, however, been several times reprinted, and may be found in Stedman's *Library of American Literature*, Vol. I., 21.

And then on shoare the iland came, inhabited by hogges, Some fowle and tortoyses there were, they only had one dogge,

"To kill these swyne, to yield them foode that little had to eate; Their store was spent, and all things scant, alas! they wanted meate.

A thousand hogges that dogge did kill, their hunger to sustaine, And with such foode did in that ile two and forty weekes remaine."

The two vessels constructed there of "seader-tree" enabled Gates and Somers to resume their journey to Jamestown, where they arrived at a very critical time in the history of the colony. Disease and famine had wrought sad havoc among the colonists; and in their suffering and despair, they were ready to abandon their settlement forever. The timely arrival of Lord Delaware with a fresh supply of food and helpers brought new hope and courage to the fleeing colonists:—

"And in the midst of discontent came noble Delaware;

He heard the griefs on either part, and set them free from care. He comforts them and cheeres their hearts that they abound with joy;

He feedes them full and feedes their soules with God's word every day."

Lord Delaware appointed a discreet council, and inspired the entire colony, "full foure hundred able men," to resume the abandoned work.

"Where they unto their labour fall, as men that meane to thrive; Let's pray that Heaven may bless them all, and keep them long alive.

Those men that vagrants lived with us, have there deserved well; Their governour writes in their praise, as divers letters tell.

"And to the adventurers thus he writes: Be not dismayed at all, For scandall cannot doe us wrong. God will not let us fall.

Let England knowe our willingness, for that our worke is goode; We hope to plant a nation, where none before hath stood.

"To glorifie the Lord 'tis done, and to no other end;
He that would cross so good a worke, to God can be no friend.
There is no feare of hunger here, for come much store here growes,

Much fish the gallant rivers yield, 'tis truth without suppose."

The concluding stanzas of this interesting, circumstantial poem present the Jamestown colony in a very attractive light. Apart from two ship loads of needful commodities—"furres, sturgeon, caviare, black walnut-tree and some deale boards"—which the forethought and generosity of "the noble Delaware" had provided, the poet explains the liberal terms of the London Company, by which each colonist, in addition to his daily wages, was to have "a house and garden plot" and also "a share of the generall profit." The people of London were not blind or indifferent to these inducements; for the last stanza informs us that—

"The number of adventurers, that are for this plantation,
Are full eight-hundred worthy men, some noble, all of fashion.
Good, discreete, their worke is good, and as they have begun,
May Heaven assist them in their worke, and thus our newes is
done."

George Sandys.—It is a common error to suppose that poetic gifts are incompatible with an aptitude for the practical affairs of life. Though minor poets often exhibit unattractive idiosyncrasies, the great masters of song have generally shown an eminent sanity, and in not a few cases distinguished themselves as men of affairs. Not long after Shakespeare had retired to Stratford-on-Avon on a competent fortune earned by the successfull management of London theaters, George Sandys (1577-1644), who migrated to Jamestown in 1621, was making himself useful

to the infant colony. While serving it faithfully as treasurer, he devised large and admirable measures for its development and independence. He is said to have introduced the first watermill in the new world; and the establishment of iron-works and the beginning of shipbuilding in Virginia were due to his wisdom and energy.

Before going to America, Sandys had been a scholarly traveler in the Orient. In 1615 he published an account of his travels in Turkey, Palestine, and Egypt—a work that was received with favor by the king and the public. The poetic gifts of our author, who had begun a translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, were likewise recognized before he left England. In a poetic epistle Michael Drayton, himself a poet of no mean gifts, urged his friend to woo the Muses in Virginia and complete the work so happily begun:—

"And worthy George, by industry and use,
Let's see what lines Virginia will produce.
Go on with Ovid, as you have begun
With the first five books; let your numbers run
Glib as the former; so shall it live long
And do much honor to the English tongue.
Entice the Muses thither to repair;
Entreat them gently; train them to that air;
For they from hence may thither hap to fly." 1

Sandys responded to this generous encouragement and to the unquenchable literary impulse within his bosom. His prosecution of the work of translation amidst the duties of his office and the turmoils and horrors connected with the massacre of 1622, was something heroic. In his dedicatory letter addressed "To the most High and Mightie Prince Charles, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland," he reveals the circumstances of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Anderson's British Poets, Vol. III., 542.

its composition. It was "limn'd by that imperfect light which was snatched from the howers of night and repose. . . It needeth more than a single denization, being a double stranger. Sprung from the stocke of the ancient Romanes, but bred in the New World, of the rudeness whereof it cannot but participate; especially having Warres and Tumults to bring it to light instead of the Muses."

After the dissolution of the London Company in 1624 by the high-handed measures of the king, Sandys returned to London with his manuscript. It was published in a substantial folio in 1626. As will be seen from the following extract, the translation is iambic pentameter in rhyming couplets. It adheres faithfully to the original; and the vigor of the verse reflects credit on the literary skill and poetic gifts of the translator.

"The Golden Age was first; which uncompeld,
And without rule, in Faith and Truth exceld,
As then there was nor punishment nor feare;
Nor threatning Laws in brass prescribed were;
Nor suppliant crouching pris'ners shooke to see
Their angrie Judge; but all was safe and free.
To visit other Worlds no wounded Pine
Did yet from Hills to faithless Seas decline.
Then, unambitious Mortals knew no more
But their owne Countrie's nature-bounded shore."

The translation received worthy recognition, and before the close of the century reached its eighth edition. It was not without influence upon Dryden, who pronounced Sandys "the

¹ Ovid's Metamorphoses, Englished by G. S. Imprinted at London MDCXXVI. Cum privilegio. London. Printed by William Stansby. Copies of this rare work may be found at Harvard, the State Library at Richmond, and the Library of Congress. The copy in the Library of Congress, a well-worn volume in leather, was used in the preparation of this sketch.

best versifier of the former age;" and Pope, who was very cautious in bestowing praise, said that he "liked it extremely."

After his return to England, Sandys employed his talents in turning parts of the Scriptures—the Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes—into verse. He also wrote a few original poems, which old Thomas Fuller characterized as "sprightful, vigorous, and masculine." But as all this work was done in England, it does not call for further notice here. Sandys died at a ripe and honored old age, in 1644.

Later, when Dryden himself came to make translations from Ovid, he spoke less favorably of Sandys' version, from which he thought the poetry of the original, or the greater part of it, had evaporated. It is interesting to compare his rendering with that of Sandys, and to note the substitution of smoothness for rugged strength:—

<sup>&</sup>quot;The Golden Age was first; when man, yet new,
No rule but uncorrupted reason knew;
And with a native bent, did good pursue.
Unforc'd by punishment, unaw'd by fear,
His words were simple and his soul sincere:
Needless was written law, where none opprest;
The law of man was written in his breast:
No suppliant crowds before the judge appear'd;
No court erected yet, nor cause was heard;
But all was safe, for conscience was their guard.
The mountain trees in distant prospect please,
Ere yet the pine descended to the seas;
Ere sails were spread, new oceans to explore;
And happy mortals, unconcern'd for more,
Confin'd their wishes to their native shore."

#### CHAPTER II

#### Early Colonial Days

After this promising outburst at Jamestown, poetry passed under an almost total eclipse during the rest of the seventeenth century. An adequate explanation of this sudden decline, however much it is to be regretted, is found in the social conditions prevailing in Virginia. Poetry is a delicate flower; and as a rule, it requires a friendly soil and atmosphere for its development. These necessary conditions for its growth and perfection were lacking in those early, strenuous days.

The brilliant beginning of literature already noticed was due to writers English born and English bred. They brought with them to the wilderness of the New World something of the taste and culture of the great Elizabethan era. Afterwards Virginia was thrown more largely upon her native talent; and, as we shall see, neither opportunity for literary culture nor impulse to literary activity existed in any large measure during this early period.

For the greater part of the first century after the planting of the colony, the energies of the people were almost entirely absorbed in the difficult work of establishing for themselves a permanent and prosperous home. This task included not only the building of houses and the clearing of farms, but also the subduing of hostile and treacherous tribes of Indians. Grave governmental questions, involving the freedom and welfare of the colony, and leading sometimes to serious outbreaks, came up for settlement. The colony shared more or less in the wars and revolutions of the mother country. Under the stress of this toilsome and dangerous life, there could be but little leisure for the cultivation of literature as an art.

The Virginia colonists, perpetuating English traditions and devoted to agriculture, settled on large plantations. were no towns; and even Jamestown, the capital, had at the close of the seventeenth century only a state house, one church, and eighteen private dwellings. There is scarcely any mention of schools before 1688; and learning fell into such neglect that Governor Spottswood in 1715 reproached the colonial assembly for having furnished two of its standing committees with chairmen who could not "spell English or write common sense." There was no printing-press in Virginia before 1681; and the printer was then required to give bond not to print anything "until his Majesty's pleasure shall be known." For nearly forty years of this period, from 1641 to 1677, Sir William . Berkeley exerted his influence and power "in favor of the fine old conservative policy of keeping subjects ignorant in order to keep them submissive." Under these circumstances there was surely but little encouragement to literature.

Toward the close of the period before us, however, it is to be noted that a growing interest in higher education resulted in 1692 in the founding of the College of William and Mary, the oldest institution of learning in the South, and, after Harvard, the oldest in the United States. It received a cordial support not only in Virginia, but also in England. The lieutenant-governor headed the subscription list with a generous gift, and his example was followed by other prominent members of the colony. The king made liberal provisions for its maintenance and endowment. The college was located at Williamsburg; and during the eighteenth century it furnished an astonishing number of judges, statesmen, and authors. It became for a long time the literary center of the Old Dominion.

Of poetry in Virginia during the second half of the seventeenth century, it may almost be said there was none. The "two copies of Latin verses," which the charter of William and Mary College required the authorities to present annually to the king, hardly call for attention. Their excellence does not appear to have enriched literature. John Grave, of whom nothing further is known, published a poem of a dozen pages entitled A Song to Zion, the spirit and quality of which may be gathered from its closing lines:—

"Glory to God, whose goodness doth increase, Praise him ever, who gives to us his peace."

The only poems worthy of particular note are found in a pamphlet among the Burwell Papers, which were first published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, in 1814. The pamphlet in question describes "The Beginning, Progress, and Conclusion of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia;" it is friendly in tone to the energetic and eloquent rebel, and the author judges it advisable not to give his name. An avowal of its authorship would probably have exposed him to the implacable vengeance of Governor Berkeley, of whom Charles II. sneeringly said, "The old fool has taken away more lives in that naked country than I have taken for the murder of my father."

The author of the pamphlet tells us that there were many copies of verses made after Bacon's death, "calculated to the latitude of their affections who composed them." The two poems in the pamphlet—the one a eulogy, the other an execration—are evidently by the same hand, and reveal an unexpected literary culture and poetic talent. Though there is an effort to obscure the fact, the author of the pamphlet is probably the poet. The first poem is entitled Bacon's Epitaph, Made by his Man:—

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Extended extracts from these papers will be found in Stedman's Library of American Literature, including the poems mentioned.

"Death, why so cruel? What! no other way
To manifest thy spleen, but thus to slay
Our hopes of safety, liberty, our all,
Which, through thy tyranny, with him must fall
To its late chaos? Had thy rigid force
Been dealt by retail, and not thus in gross,
Grief had been silent. Now we must complain,
Since thou, in him, hast more than thousands slain;
Whose lives and safeties did so much depend
On him their life, with him their lives must end.

If 't be a sin to think Death bribed can be,
We must be guilty; say, 'twas bribery
Guided the fatal shaft. Virginia's foes,
To whom for secret crimes just vengeance owes
Deserved plagues, dreading their just desert,
Corrupted Death by Paracelsian art
Him to destroy; whose will-tried courage such,
Their heartless hearts, nor arms, nor strength could touch.

Who now must heal those wounds, or stop that blood
The heathen made, and drew into a flood?
Who is't must plead our cause? Nor trump, nor drum,
Nor deputations; these, alas, are dumb,
And cannot speak. Our arms—though ne'er so strong—
Will want the aid of his commanding tongue,
Which conquered more than Cæsar: he o'erthrew
Only the outward frame; this could subdue
The rugged works of nature. Souls replete
With dull, chill cold, he'd animate with heat
Drawn forth of reason's lymbec. In a word,
Mars and Minerva both in him concurred
For arts, for arms, whose pen and sword alike,

As Cato's did, may admiration strike Into his foes; while they confess withal, It was their guilt styled him a criminal. Only this difference doth from truth proceed, They in the guilt, he in the name, must bleed; While none shall dare his obsequies to sing In deserved measures, until Time shall bring Truth crowned with freedom, and from danger free, To sound his praises to posterity.

Here let him rest; while we this truth report, He's gone from hence unto a higher court, To plead his cause where he by this doth know Whether to Cæsar he was friend or foe."

Of the poem of denunciation, which is inferior to the preceding poem of laudation, only the concluding lines are here given:

"Nor is't a single cause that's slipped away, That made us warble out a well-a-day! The brains to plot, the hands to execute Projected ills, Death jointly did nonsuit

At his black Bar. And what no bail could save He hath committed prisoner to the grave, From whence there's no reprieve. Death keep him close; We have two many Devils still go loose."

#### CHAPTER III

#### The Eighteenth Century before the Revolution

Literature is an expression of the life of a people. The thoughts and feelings embodied in literature proceed, in large measure, from the surroundings and interests of daily life. During the eighteenth century, the literary development of Virginia, as well as that of the other colonies, was quite remarkable. Literature kept pace with the material progress of the country; but the amount of poetry written in Virginia is phenomenally meagre.

This comparative absence of poetry in Virginia is a fact to be accounted for. In other parts of America it was different. In the New England and Middle colonies verse-writers during the same period may be counted by the dozen. Every species of poetry was represented: Mather Byles (1706-1788), an eloquent preacher of Boston, published a volume of miscellaneous verse in 1736; William Livingston (1723-1790), for a number of years governor of New Jersey, wrote a long didactic poem entitled *Philosophic Solitude*; and John Godfrey (1736-1763), of Philadelphia, composed the first drama of America, *The Prince of Parthia*. It was not till near the close of the eighteenth century, after the war of the Revolution had been fought and won, that Virginia made any important contribution to poetry.

In some respects the conditions existing in the colonies further north were more favorable to literary, and particularly to poetic productions. Education was more general there; and Boston, New York, and Philadelphia had, in some degree, become centers of culture and supplied a stimulus to literary achievement. Yet culture was by no means lacking in Virginia; and

while poetry was languishing, noteworthy contributions to literature were being made in prose. William Byrd (1674-1744), for example, wrote his *History of the Dividing Line* between Virginia and North Carolina, with its graphic descriptions, sage reflections, and witty thrusts. William Stith (1689-1755), president of William and Mary College, prepared a *History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia*, which has since been held in just esteem for its scholarly accuracy.

Perhaps the chief explanation of the small amount of poetry in Virginia during the period under consideration is to be found in the predominance of practical interests. The organization of society was in large measure aristocratic. The wealth and culture of the colony were found chiefly in what is called Tidewater Virginia. The towns were comparatively few in number and insignificant in population; and the dominant class of people lived on great entailed estates in something of feudal opulence. These baronial homes were the seat of boundless hospitality and courtly culture. The literary refinement belonging to the age of Pope and Addison, acquired in many cases by education in the mother country, was not lacking. But social enjoyments, the management of large estates, and especially the constant pressure of some political question left but little time or impulse for the cultivation of the art of poetic expression.

The tardiness of Virginia in founding newspapers withheld the encouragement to poetry that existed north of the Potomac. In 1704 the News-Letter, the first periodical of the New World, was published in Boston; and before the close of the French and Indian War in 1763, nine other papers had made their appearance in the Northern colonies. Official censorship was there early removed. It received its death-blow in New York in 1734 when Andrew Hamilton, addressing a jury in behalf of an imprisoned printer, successfully maintained "the liberty of opposing arbitrary power by speaking and writing truth."

The first newspaper in the Old Dominion was The Virginia Gazette, which was established at Williamsburg in 1736. It was a sheet six by twelve inches, and cost fifteen shillings a year. As it had the patronage of the government, nothing hostile to England or to England's representative was allowed to appear in its columns. As the revolutionary era drew near, it failed to voice the sentiments of Virginia patriots and to stimulate literary interest.

In 1768 the Gazette contained a pretty full account of the reception given to Lord Botetourt on his arrival at the capital. "The city was illuminated, and all ranks vied with each other in testifying their gratitude and joy." In the following issue appeared an ode of welcome, the opening lines of which will be read with pleasure for their archaic style and sentiment:—

"Virginia, see, thy Governor appears!
The peaceful olive on his brow he wears!
Sound the shrill trumpets, beat the rattling drums;
From Great Britannia's isle his Lordship comes.
Bid echo from the waving woods arise,
And joyful acclamations reach the skies;
Let the loud organs join the tuneful roar,
And bellowing cannons rend the pebbled shore;
Bid smooth James River catch the cheerful sound,
And roll it to Virginia's utmost bound;
While Rappahannock and York's gliding stream
Swift shall convey the sweetly pleasing theme
To distant plains, where ponderous mountains rise,
Whose cloud-capp'd verges meet the bending skies.

The Lordly prize the Atlantic waves resign, And now, Virginia, now the blessing's thine: His listening ears will to your trust attend, And be your Guardian, Governor, and Friend.

He comes; his Excellency comes,
To cheer Virginian plains!
Fill your brisk bowls, ye loyal sons,
And sing your loftiest strains.

Be this your glory, this your boast,
Lord Botetourt's the favorite toast;
Triumphant wreaths entwine;
Fill full your bumpers swiftly round,
And make your spacious rooms rebound
With music, joy, and wine."

This is perhaps the first poem in which the landscape of Virginia finds celebration. The poem possesses the further interest of throwing light on the convivial customs of the time, in which there is no trace of a rigorous or forbidding asceticism. The colonists of those days may have been a little severe in requiring attendance at church and enforcing observance of the Sabbath; but it is evident that they retained a cavalier freedom in eating and drinking.

The eighteenth century, prior to the Revolution, was an era of territorial expansion and settlement. In 1716 Governor Spotswood made his famous expedition across the Blue Ridge into the alluring valley of the Shenandoah. The "knights of the Golden Horseshoe," as the convivial company of the adventurous governor was called, did not fail to spread far and wide an account of the marvelously inviting region they had discovered. From Tidewater Virginia an increasing number of explorers and settlers, following the course of great rivers, moved westward toward the mountains, and began to occupy the splendid Piedmont region. In 1733 Colonel William Byrd founded the city of Richmond, which was afterwards to become the metropolis and literary center of the State.

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, a double migratory movement rapidly filled the great Shenandoah Valley from Harper's Ferry to the river James. One migration was that of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, who occupied chiefly the territory now embraced in the counties of Augusta and Rockbridge. In 1737 John Lewis—a family name distin-

guished in the military annals of the State—brought over from Ireland and Scotland about one hundred families, from which have sprung some of the most eminent men of Virginia.

The other migratory movement was that of the German Lutherans and Dutch Calvinists. Landing in large numbers at Philadelphia, they first moved westward in Pennsylvania, whence many of them were turned southward into the Shenandoah region by reports of its surpassing fertility. The center of this German migration was the section now embraced in the county of Shenandoah. Many interesting details of these early settlements have been preserved in Kercheval's chronicles, known as the *History of the Valley*.

These migrations not only settled new territory in Virginia, but they also introduced new elements into the life of the State. The Scotch-Irish and Teutonic settlers of the Valley present many contrasts to the English colonists of the Tidewater region. They adhered, not to the Church of England, but to other forms of the Protestant faith. They substituted small farms for the baronial possessions of eastern Virginia; and if they were not indifferent to wedding festivities and other social enjoyments, they led a simpler, thriftier life than usually prevailed east of the Blue Ridge. But by and by the people of the different sections of the State became more homogeneous, and cordially and bravely worked together in achieving independence and in building up the material and intellectual greatness of the Old Dominion.

# THE PERIOD OF THE REVOLUTION (1763-1815)

#### CHAPTER IV

#### Political and Literary Activity

During the period of the Revolution, which is here made to embrace several decades, the intellectual energies of Virginia, as of the other colonies, were gathered about the two great questions of political independence and the foundation of a great republic. It was the heroic period of Virginia history; and we cannot peruse the determined and eloquent words of men like Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, George Mason, and others, without feeling the spirit of freedom kindled anew in our bosoms. No other colony furnished so many distinguished leaders in achieving American independence and establishing the federal government. With her glory as the mother of states and statesmen, it is no great reproach that Virginia has missed the laureate wreath of poesy.

The grave earnestness with which Virginians faced the political problems of the revolutionary era is reflected in their writings. The business in hand seemed to them altogether too vital for trifling. James Madison assisted in writing the Federalist; John Marshall expounded the fundamental principles of our government; George Washington, after starting the ship of state on its magnificent course, prepared his Farewell Address as a permanent chart. It was left to other parts of our country, treating the issues in lighter vein, to sing, as did Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791) of Pennsylvania, the famous Battle

of the Kegs, or to satirize in the strains of Butler's Hudibras, as did John Trumbull (1750-1831) of Connecticut in his McFingal, the attitude and discomfiture of the Tories.

With the growing sentiment of independence in Virginia the need of a new organ of expression was felt. Accordingly, as Jefferson tells us, a second newspaper, also entitled *The Virginia Gazette*, was started at Williamsburg in May 1766. It was nominally independent, "open to all parties, but influenced by none;" yet the circumstances of its establishment sufficiently indicate on which side its sympathies and influence were placed. When the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed, it declared—

"Now will America's sons her fame increase In arms and science, with glory, honor, and peace."

In this new Virginia Gazette, shortly after its establishment, appeared a brief poem voicing the bolder spirit of independence. It is entitled Hearts of Oak, and like many other ballads belonging to the revolutionary era, is anonymous. While the colony was presided over by a royalist governor, the poet found it prudent, in breathing rebellious sentiments, to conceal his identity. Otherwise his poetic fervor was in danger of being cooled in a dungeon. The last two stanzas of this poem are quoted:—

"On our brow while we laurel-crown'd liberty wear,
What Englishman ought, we Americans dare;
Though tempests and terrors around us we see,
Bribes nor fears can prevail o'er the hearts that are free.
Hearts of Oak are we still, for we're sons of those men
Who always are ready, steady, boys, steady,
To fight for their freedom again and again!

"With Loyalty, Liberty let us entwine,
Our blood shall for both flow as free as our wine;
Let us set an example what all men should be,
And a toast give the world, 'Here's to those dare be free.'

Hearts of Oak are we still, for we're sons of those men Who always are ready, steady, boys, steady, To fight for their freedom again and again!" <sup>1</sup>

Colonel Bland.—The American Revolution, so far as is known, found echo in a single contemporary Virginia poem. It was inspired by the battle of Lexington in 1775, and, as Mr. Charles Campbell, the editor of The Bland Papers, remarks, it is "rather distinguished for its patriotic than its poetic merit." Yet Colonel Theodoric Bland (1742-1790) was not without poetic gifts and aspirations. When pursuing his studies abroad, he made a versified translation of the first Eclogue of Virgil, which, as a juvenile performance, possesses considerable merit. took his degree in medicine at Edinburgh, as did many other Virginia physicians, and after a year or two spent in travel on the continent, he returned to America about 1765 and entered upon the practice of his profession. He shared the spirit of independence that was sweeping over the colonies; and though he "was fondly meditating a life of peaceful seclusion and sighing for some sequestered Abyssinian happy valley," he entered the service of his country first as a soldier and afterwards as a legislator. He was a member of Congress from 17.79 to 1783. He was a man of courtly manner, sterling integrity, and practical wisdom, well deserving that esteem and confidence of Washington which he long enjoyed.

His poem on the battle of Lexington has not been preserved in its entirety. The strange neglect of his manuscripts, an interesting account of which is given by Campbell, resulted in the mutilation of the poem. Sixteen stanzas have been preserved, the last and best of which are here given:—

¹ The entire poem may be found in Duyckinck's Cyclopedia of American Literature, Vol. I., 451.

"Shall Brunswick's line, exalted high,
And freely placed on Britain's throne,
See hapless freedom prostrate lie
And trampled on by Brunswick's son?

"Ye nobles great, ye barons bold,
Remember glorious Runnymede!
Your ancestors, nor bought nor sold,
Stood ready for their rights to bleed.

"Then spurn the proffered bribe with scorn—
The chartered rights your sires have won
Purely transmit to those unborn—
Let not the sire enslave the son.

"Your brothers free in distant climes
With noble ardor on you call,
Prepared to meet tempestuous times,
And prop the fabric ere it fall."

James McClurg.—The student of American literature has frequent occasion to notice that poetry is often only a side issue—an avocation from the more serious pursuits of life. This is particularly true of Virginia and other parts of the South. James McClurg (1747-1825), after completing his studies at William and Mary College, studied medicine in Edinburgh and Paris. While abroad he published an essay on Human Bile, which was translated, it is said, into all the languages of Europe. On his return to this country, he opened an office in Williamsburg, where his social and professional talents gave him a prominent place in the brilliant society of the colonial capital.

His poetic fame is due to a single piece, which was written in 1777. It is entitled *The Belles of Williamsburg*—a bit of vers de société which owes its prominence, not so much to intrinsic excellence as to the scarcity of Virginia poetry at that time. It has been felicitously introduced by John Esten Cooke in his excellent novel *The Virginia Comedians*. A few stanzas (there

are sixteen in all) will show the light, gallant spirit of the poem:—

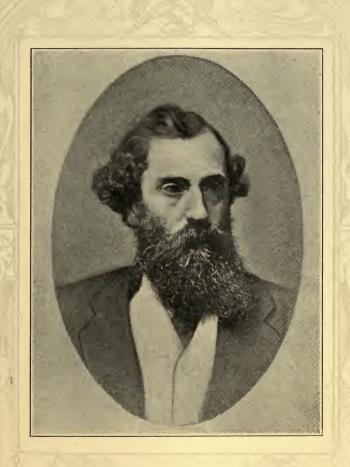
"Wilt thou, adventurous pen, describe
The gay, delightful, silken tribe,
That maddens all our city;
Nor dread, lest while you foolish claim
A near approach to beauty's flame,
Icarus' fate may hit ye?

"With singed pinions trembling down,
The scorn and laughter of the town,
Thou'lt rue thy daring flight;
While every miss with cool contempt,
Affronted by the bold attempt,
Will, tittering, view thy plight.

"Ye girls, to you devoted ever,
The object still of our endeavor
Is somehow to amuse you;
And if instead of higher praise
You only laugh at these rude lays,
We'll willingly excuse you."

St. George Tucker.—St. George Tucker (1752-1827) was born in Bermuda, July 9, 1752. He came to Virginia some twenty years later, and after graduating at William and Mary College, entered upon the study and practice of law. He became a l'eutenant-colonel in the Revolutionary war, and at the siege of Yorktown received a wound that lamed him for life. By his marriage to Mrs. Randolph in 1778, he became the stepfather of the brilliant but erratic John Randolph of Roanoke.

In 1789 he was made professor of law in William and Mary College, succeeding the eminent and scholarly George Wythe. He was for many years a distinguished judge in the State and Federal courts; and on account of his legal writings, particularly his How Far the Common Law of England is the Common Law of the United States (1803), he was called "the American Blackstone."



JOHN REUBEN THOMPSON

But from his early manhood he showed a fondness and aptitude for poetry. He added several stanzas to McClurg's Belles of Williamsburg. In 1796 he published The Probationary Odes of Jonathan Pindar, Esq., the object of which was to satirize John Adams and other leading Federalists for their alleged monarchical tendencies. The book is divided into two parts. The poems of the first part, as a preliminary advertisement informs us, were originally published in Freneau's Gazette in the summer of 1793, the year Washington entered upon his second term of office as president of the United States. poems are written with keen satirical wit, and Vice-president John Adams, who sometimes appears in the verse as "Daddy Vice," receives special attention, though Hamilton's initial is of frequent occurrence. A few stanzas from Ode IV., "to a would-be great man," must suffice to illustrate the manner and tone of the whole work. It is easy to see that Tucker was not a stranger to the satirical measure of Burns.

"Daddy Vice, Daddy Vice,
One may see in a trice
The drift of your fine publication; 2
As sure as a Gun,
The thing was just done
To secure you—a pretty High station.

"Defences you call
To knock down our wall,
And batter the States to the ground, Sir;

¹The full title of this rare book is as follows: "The Probationary Odes of Jonathan Pindar, Esq., a Cousin of Peter's, and Candidate for the Post of Poet Laureat to the C. U. S. In two parts. Philadelphia, 1796," pp., 103. The copy used by the author was kindly furnished by the librarian of Brown University.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This was Adam's Defense of the American Constitution, first published in England.

P. of Va.-3

So thick were your shot, And so hell-fire hot, They've scarce a whole bone to be found, Sir.

"When you tell us of Kings,
And such pretty things,
Good mercy! how brilliant your page is!
So bright is each line,
I vow now you'll shine
Like—a Glow-worm, to all future ages."

Not all the poetry of St. George Tucker was satirical; and one of his fugitive pieces, written apparently in his old age, has been much admired. It is entitled Days of My Youth, and is worthy of transcription in full:—

"Days of my youth,
Ye have glided away;
Hairs of my youth,
Ye are frosted and gray;
Eyes of my youth,
Your keen sight is no more;
Cheeks of my youth,
Ye are furrowed all o'er;
Strength of my youth,
All your vigor is gone;
Thoughts of my youth,
Your gay visions are flown.

"Days of my youth,
 I wish not your recall;
Hairs of my youth,
 I'm content ye should fall.
Eyes of my youth,
 You much evil have seen;
Cheeks of my youth,
 Bathed in tears have you been;
Thoughts of my youth,
 You have led me astray;
Strength of my youth,
 Why lament your decay.

"Days of my age,
Ye will shortly be past;
Pains of my age,
Yet awhile ye can last;
Joys of my age,
In true wisdom delight;
Eyes of my age,
Be religion your light;
Thoughts of my age,
Dread ye not the cold sod;
Hopes of my age,
Be ye fixed on your God."

It is interesting to know that John Adams, in spite of the sharp satire of *The Probationary Odes*, pronounced this poem superior to any lyric of Milton or Shakespeare. But however creditable to the heart of the old Federalist, this opinion will hardly command universal assent.

John Burk.—John Burk—so the name appears on the title page of his dramas—was a native of Ireland. While a student at Dublin College, he attempted to rescue a rebel who was being led to execution. The attempt seems to have been more heroic than judicious; and sharply pursued by the authorities, he made his escape in woman's apparel, and as many loyal Irishmen have since done, fled to America. He conducted a newspaper—The Polar Star—in Boston and afterwards another publication in New York. The last number of the Boston paper was dated Teb. 2, 1797; apparently, as Professor Brander Matthews remarks, "The Polar Star remained above the horizon barely six months, and then sank forever into the darkness of night."

After suffering arrest in New York under the Alien and Sedition laws, Burk removed to Virginia where he found politically a more congenial atmosphere. He practiced law at Petersburg; and on the 4th of March, 1803, he delivered at the court-

house there an eloquent oration to celebrate the election of Jefferson to the presidency and the triumph of democracy. He was killed in a duel resulting from a political quarrel, April 11, 1808.

Burk was both a historian and a dramatist. His History of the Late War in Ireland (Philadelphia, 1797), though breathing a strong partisan spirit, is eloquently written. His History of Virginia from the First Settlement down to 1804, has been warmly commended. But our chief concern with him is as a poet and dramatist—a department of literature to which he was drawn at an early period. His Prince of Susa was probably written before he left Ireland.

His Female Patriotism; or, the Death of Joan D'Arc, a drama in five acts, was the first of his plays to appear in America. He subsequently wrote his Bunker Hill; or, the Death of Warren, likewise a regular five-act tragedy, which, as the title page informs us, was "performed at the theatres in America for fourteen nights with unbounded applause." This drama, first printed in 1808, is dedicated, in a laudatory letter, to Aaron Burr.

An incident which took place at a performance of this drama in New York shows that there was at least one dissenting voice in the chorus of "unbounded applause." President John Adams had been invited to witness the performance; and after the play, he was escorted to his carriage by the leading actors with considerable pomp. Mr. Barrett, who had acted the part of General Warren, ventured to express the hope that the President had been pleased. "Sir," said Mr. Adams, "my friend General Warren was a scholar and a gentleman, but your author has made him a bully and blackguard."

Burk was a dramatic poet by no means contemptible. His dramas are molded after Shakespeare; and in his *Bunker Hill*, he appropriates thirty lines verbatim from Henry VI., a fact

to which attention is called in a note at the end of the piece. It is rather remarkable that the quotation in question is read without any conscious jar of transition. A few lines must serve to illustrate our author's style:—

"Curse on the authors of all war and strife:
They are who fill the world with wretchedness;
Who tread on honor and humanity;
Who rend all ties which knit the soul together;
E'en love, the solace of the human race,
Their phrenzy spares not."

### CHAPTER V

#### The Munfords

A literary taste is often transmitted by heredity or developed by environment and education. There are families, like the Dwights and Adamses of New England, in which literature finds a congenial habitat and development. But the poetic gift is less frequently transmitted than a penchant for prose; and it is a singular fact that the greatest singers of the English race—Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, Browning—left no lineal descendants touched with Olympian flame. At the close of the eighteenth century there were two Virginia writers, father and son, who felt in equal degree the poetic impulse. These were Colonel Robert Munford and William Munford.

Colonel Munford.—Concerning Colonel Munford few biographical facts are accessible. He lived in Mecklenburg County; and during the Revolution, he achieved distinction as a patriot and soldier. He was a shrewd observer of men and events; and after the Revolutionary war, he took a keen interest in the political movements about him. What he saw of human foible and hypocrisy he recorded, with a strong sense of humor, both in prose and poetry.

His plays and poems, which were given to the world posthumously by his son, form an entertaining volume. They amply justify the filial editor in the conviction "that the work is calculated to afford considerable amusement and instruction." But there was also a pious purpose in the publication. "Though to all they may not appear in the light which they do to me," says the son William Munford, "as precious memorials of that wit and poetical genius which once animated the breast of him who

is now forever laid in the silent tomb, and who once was the delight of his friends and family; yet many, I hope, when they read this work, will remember a departed friend, and mourn the loss of the man while they enjoy the humor of the poet."

The plays are in prose. The first is entitled *The Candidates*, of which the editor justly says: "The piece is intended to laugh to scorn the practice of corruption and falsehood, of which too many are guilty in electioneering; to teach our countrymen to despise the arts of those who meanly attempt to influence their votes by anything but merit." The election scenes it portrays, if they are true to the facts then existing, may well leave us content that "the good old days" are a century behind us. The play closes with this wholesome moral:—

"Henceforth, let those who pray for wholesome laws, And all well-wishers to their country's cause, Like us refuse a coxcomb—choose a man—
Then let our senate blunder if it can."

The second play is called *The Patriots*, and brings before us something of the courtly manner and high-flown forms of address common at the close of the eighteenth century. In this play we meet with the two inevitable tendencies of conservatism and radicalism, and also with many a touch of universal human nature. The heroine Mira was neither the first nor the last to feel the conflict between her ardent affections and her filial obligations. "I wish," she exclaims, "love and duty could always go hand in hand; but the little tyrant will be obeyed, even when all the virtues oppose him." To adopt the words of the editor, "The play of *The Patriots* is a picture of real and pretended patriots; by which the reader may perceive the difference between them, may learn to honor and reward the true, and to treat the false with infamy and contempt."

The latter part of the volume under review is taken up with

poetry. The translation of the first book of Ovid's Metamor-phoses does credit alike to the author's classical scholarship and to his poetical skill. The Ram is a comic poem; it claims to be based on an actual occurrence, and satirizes the fashion of very high head-dresses, which were then in vogue. Two fashionable young ladies—

"The one I'll nickname Molly,
And for the rhyme, the other Dolly"—

found on one occasion that they lacked materials to build up their coiffures to the requisite altitude. In their desperation they resolved to proceed to the pasture field and there to deprive a sheep of a goodly part of its fleece.

> "Their hats and mantles on they drew, And instant to the meadow flew; A vicious ram was there confined, And kept apart from all his kind."

Ignorance or courage left the resourceful maidens undismayed. They planned a skilful attack:—

"The ram majestic marched along,
As some proud puppy through a throng;
But soon the crafty foe he feels
Attacking both at head and heels:
One seized his horns, and one his wool."

At length the furious creature turned upon his assailants. It is needless to pursue the harrowing details—to describe the havoc made of powder, false curls, and fluffy materials, which the blinded sheep, in his effort to shake them from his horns, scattered over the field. All that may be safely left to the imagination. Finally the girls made their escape, and returned home, disordered in dress but enriched in experience; and because

they could not appear at church in the garb of fashion, they resolved to remain away from public worship.

"Then sad they sit, and mope, and pine;
Each thinks, what conquests had been mine
Of lovers' hearts, at church to-day
Could I have gone in fair array,
In fashions' airy pride adorned;
But now by all I shall be scorned."

No doubt is left as to the "moral application" of the poem:-

"Ye fair ones, let your heads be full
Of sense, but load them not with wool.
Fight not with rams to gain their fleece;
Trust me, such aids can ne'er increase
Your native charms: it is not art,
But nature which attracts the heart.
Your flowing locks which nature gave
O'er ivory necks in beauty wave;
These nets of love our souls ensnare,
All unadorned with art or care;
While pride, and pomp's fastidious train
Are parents of disgust and pain."

William Munford.—William Munford (1775-1825) was educated at William and Mary College, where his taste for classical study was developed under the eminent George Wythe, afterwards his instructor in law. After finishing his legal course of study, he entered upon an engrossing political career. In 1811 he was appointed clerk of the House of Delegates—a position which he faithfully filled till his death in 1825. For a number of years he reported the decisions of the Supreme Court, ten volumes of which, from 1806 to 1820, were prepared by his hand. But throughout his busy and honorable political career, he never lost his literary tastes nor entirely ceased his literary activities.

In 1798 appeared his Poems and Compositions in Prose on Several Occasions—upon the whole a somewhat youthful performance. In his general preface the author naively says: "The following poems are submitted to the public eye for several reasons. The first is that the author hopes they may afford some entertainment and perhaps some improvement to those who choose to read them; the second that they may procure to the author some small reputation; and the third that his not overburdened purse may receive a very agreeable supply." The fallacious idea seems to have had some currency in those days that writing poetry is financially remunerative.

He makes a plea, not unusual in the earlier literary productions of Virginia, for mercy at the hands of his critics. "If many defects be discovered herein," he says, "and many defects there are I doubt not, I hope that the world will consider the youth of the author, and pardon many imperfections for that single plea. The least symptoms of future merit should for the advantage of mankind be carefully encouraged, for the beautiful flowers of genius are not so common that we may wantonly destroy any of them in the bud without a sensible loss. The good critic will therefore overlook a number of faults in the productions of youth, and will nourish with a fostering hand whatever seeds of heaven-bestowed spirit he may find in his mind."

The first poem, some ten pages in length, is an elegy on the defeat of Gen. St. Clair, Nov. 4, 1791. It begins,—

"Americans, attend my song;
A tale of grief I tell,
How twice five hundred warriors strong
Far 'midst the forest fell."

The volume contains, besides translations from Horace and metrical versions of Ossian, a five-act tragedy styled Almoran

and Hamet. It is founded on an Eastern tale, and is sufficiently grandiloquent in its diction. The moral of the drama is found in the closing speech of Hamet:—

"Just God, may all my actions give thee thanks! Henceforth let mortals learn that happiness Is not to have each wild desire fulfilled, But to rely on God alone, contented With what He shall ordain, to regulate Our minds by reason and the laws of virtue.

Our author's chief claim to consideration is due to his translation of Homer's *Iliad*. This is really a monumental achievement, unequaled, except perhaps by Sandy's Ovid, in the annals of classical scholarship in Virginia. The translation engaged his attention at an early period; and between the duties of his varied public stations, he continued, with increasing ardor, to devote intervals of leisure to its completion. The work was finally completed in 1825, a short time before his death.

He was led to the great undertaking, as he tells us, "by fond admiration of the almost unparalleled sublimity and beauty of the original." He failed to find these elements of Homer adequately rendered either in Pope or Cowper. "Pope has equipped him in the fashionable style of a modern fine gentleman; Cowper displays him, like his own Ulysses, in rags unseemly, or in the uncouth garb of a savage. Surely then," he continues, "there is room for an effort to introduce him to the acquaintance of my countrymen in the simple yet graceful and venerable costume of his own heroic times."

The sound principles by which he was guided, he has presented in his preface. "In rendering into English a poem so remarkable for elegance and perspicuity, I have endeavored throughout to avoid harshness and affectation; to shun the use of obscure and obsolete, as well as of new-fangled phrases; and particularly to resort as seldom as possible to combinations or arrangements of words, corresponding rather with the Greek and Latin than the English idiom. When Homer soars aloft like an eagle, I have endeavored to follow his daring flight, without swelling into bombast, which he never does; when he gracefully descends and alights on the top of some lofty mountain, I have struggled not to fall below, but to keep with him."

The following extract will serve to show how far he was successful in reproducing the clearness, beauty, and force of the original. It is a part of the final interview between Hector and Andromache as described in the sixth book of the *Iliad*:—

"This said, illustrious Hector stretch'd his arms To take his child: but to the nurse's breast The babe clung, crying, hiding in her robe His little face, affrighted to behold His father's awful aspect, fearing too The brazen helm, and crest with horse-hair crown'd, Which nodding dreadful from its lofty cone, Alarm'd him! Sweetly then the father smil'd, And sweetly smil'd the mother! Soon the chief Remov'd the threatening helmet from his head. And plac'd it on the ground all beaming bright. Then having fondly kiss'd his son belov'd. And toss'd him playfully, he thus to Jove And all the immortals pray'd: O grant me, Jove, And other powers divine, that this my son May be, as I am, of the Trojan race In glory chief! So let him be renown'd For warlike prowess and commanding sway. With power and wisdom join'd of Ilion king! And may his people say, This chief excels His father much; when from his fields of fame Triumphant he returns, bearing aloft The bloody spoils, some hostile hero slain, And his fond mother's heart expands with joy! He said; and plac'd his child within the arms

Of his beloved spouse; she him received. And softly on her fragrant bosom laid. Smiling with tearful eyes. To pity mov'd, Her husband saw; with kind consoling hand He wip'd the tears away, and thus he spake: My dearest love! grieve not thy mind for me Excessively! No man can send me hence, To Pluto's hall, before the appointed time; And surely none of all the human race, Base or e'en brave, has ever shunn'd his fate; His fate foredoom'd when first he saw the light. But now, returning home, thy works attend, The loom and distaff, and direct thy maids In household duties, while the war shall be Of men the care: of all indeed, but most The care of me, of all in Ilion born."

The translation was not printed till 1846. It was elaborately reviewed by Professor C. C. Felton, the eminent Greek scholar of Harvard, who thought that "a translation of the Iliad coming from Virginia does more honor to that ancient .Commonwealth than her political dissertations, endless as they are." Speaking of the translation's poetic style, this critic continues: "It is rich and rhythmical, stately, and often remarkably expressive. Sometimes it reminds us of the noble march of Milton's verse; and we have no doubt the Paradise Lost was one of the favorite companions of Mr. Munford's literary hours. In the selection of single words, Mr. Munford is for the most part very happy; long passages might be pointed out, wherein no completing touch of the master's hand is wanting; the magnificent conceptions of the great original are so thoroughly rendered, with every heightening felicity of epithet, rhythm, and sound that echoes the sense."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> North American Review, July, 1846.

## CHAPTER VI

# Various Other Authors

It is to be feared that this commercial age is not very friendly to the poetic character. Our cities might contend for the honor of being the birthplace of Crœsus, but hardly of Homer. There seems to be a distrust, shared by us all, of the poetic temperament—an involuntary impression that the poet is necessarily an unpractical and eccentric person. The merciless pen of satire has sometimes mocked at the shiftlessness of the poet by portraying him in shabby dress, unshorn locks, and distracted mien. An old French writer, evidently painting from life, says of such a character,—

"Without asking his name we easily know He's either a poet or wants to be so."

But these unfriendly judgments arise from a sad lack of sympathy with the spirit of poetry or from a total misapprehension of its nature and office. It is true, as we shall presently have occasion to note, that poets are sometimes unpractical and eccentric. But these characteristics are not a necessary result of poetic gifts. Poets have no monopoly of eccentricity and visionariness; for eccentric and visionary men are sometimes found among writers of prose, and indeed in every vocation of life. And many of the most honored names in the history of England and America, as of ancient Greece and Rome, are poets—men as distinguished for sane and upright character as preëminent intellectual gifts.

Giles Julap.—This train of reflections has been suggested by The Glosser, which the title page, dated 1802, informs us is "a

poem in two books by Giles Julap." The author cannot be put in a class with Homer and Shakespeare. In a postscript to his preface, he triumphantly announces that "the tax on whiskey is put down. Huzza for the Ancient Dominion—vive old liberty pole!" From this it might fairly be inferred that Mr. Julap was a gentleman of more than ordinary convivial habits; and from the incoherency of *The Glosser* it is to be feared that the author while writing it drank not at the fount of the Muses.

The author dedicates his poem to "Mrs. Minte G. Sling," who he intimates is not "too great to be grateful." He had previously tried the patronage of "the greatest of all great men then living," but got nothing substantial in return. "True it is," he says, "he thanked me handsomely enough for the notice I took of him, and said many flattering things, and made me many kind wishes; among other things he wished me success with nine ladies. What! did he take me for a constellation of tailors,—

Who having nine lives
Must needs have nine wives?

However, as I have already addressed with success one lady, whose goodness deserves more ample retribution than my scanty circumstances admit of my making, I am illy disposed to address nine others."

As a sample of this poem, here are a few consecutive lines, discovered after much reading and search, that express, in tolerable English, a coherent idea:—

"Man is made up of imitation,
And will at once or by gradation,
Adopt the manners most before him;
Ergo—'tis prudent to secure him,
As far as may be, from examples
Immoral, and obnoxious samples."

Parson Weems.—Mason L. Weems was a writer of both prose and verse, which he sometimes mingled in the same volume. He wrote the life of Washington, of Franklin, and of Marion; and few American biographers have ever been more popular. He enriched his biographical studies with a store of anecdote, of which the interest often exceeds the authenticity. To him is due, for example, the famous story of the youthful Washington and the destructive hatchet. He was an Episcopal clergyman; and in all his writings he remained a preacher, enforcing with great originality and power the need of righteousness.

Weems was a native of Prince William county. For a time he was rector of the Mount Vernon parish, and counted Washington among the attendants upon his church. But a growing family, it seems, made it necessary for him to seek a livelihood in a more remunerative vocation; and accordingly we find him as a book agent traveling over Virginia and other parts of the South. His own works, which met with a ready sale, were no small part of his stock in trade. His genial face, his well tuned violin, his store of anecdote, and his earnest preaching made him a traveler whose presence everywhere brought kindness and good cheer. He died in 1825; and unfortunately no biographer has left us a record of what must have been an eminently interesting and useful life.

Of his numerous works we are concerned only with Hymen's Recruiting Sergeant; or, the New Matrimonial Tattoo for the Old Bachelors. This respectable pamphlet of forty pages, first published in 1805, is really a sermon, interspersed with original songs, on the text, "And the Lord said, it is not good for man to be alone." To this statement of Scripture the good parson adds, "No, verily, nor for the woman either."

As in the author's other works, there is a patriotic devotion to his country. He is proud of her people, and prays for her welfare. On the title page we read:—

"God prosper long Columbia dear,
In plenty, love, and peace;
And grant henceforth that bachelors old
'Mongst pretty maids may cease."

The dedication sets forth the profoundly patriotic purpose of this appeal of mingled prose and verse. "I am very clear," says the prose-poet, "that our buckskin heroes are made of at least as good stuff as any of the best of the beef or frog-eating gentry on t'other side the water. But neither this, nor all our fine speeches to our president, nor all his fine speeches to us again, will ever save us from the British gripe, or Carmagnole hug, while they can out-number us ten to one. No, my friends, 'tis population, 'tis population alone, that can save our bacon."

"List, then, ye bachelors, and maidens fair,
If truly you do love your country dear;
O list with rapture to the great decree,
Which thus in Genesis you all may see:
'Marry and raise up soldiers might and main,'
Then laugh you may at England, France, and Spain."

This plea for greater connubiality is divided into three parts, which are stated in the author's usual striking way with all the emphasis of abounding italics:—

- "1. If you are for pleasure-Marry!
- "2. If you prize rosy health-Marry!
- "3. And even if money be your object-Marry!"

In support of the first proposition several songs are introduced in which the poet is more concerned about the truth he is urging than about the artistic form of his verse. The first song is here given in full.

"In the world's crooked path where I've been,
There to share in life's gloom my poor part,
The sunshine that softened the scene
Was—a smile from the wife of my heart.

P. of Va .-- 4

"Not a swain when the lark quits her nest,
But to labor, with glee, will depart,
If, at eve, he expects to be blest
With—a smile from the wife of his heart.

"Come, then, crosses and cares as they may,
Let my mind still this maxim impart,
That the comfort of man's fleeting day
Is—a smile from the wife of his heart."

"Compared with a life like this," the author argues in prose, "merciful God! how disconsolate is the condition of the old bachelor! how barren of all joy! Solitary and comfortless at home he strolls abroad into company. Meeting with no tenderness nor affection, to sweeten company, he soon tires, and with a sigh gets up to go home again. Poor man! his eyes are upon the ground, and his steps are slow; for alas! home has no attractions. He sees nothing there but gloomy walls and lone-some chambers. Alone he swallows his silent supper—he crawls to bed, and trembling coils himself up in cold sheets, sadly remembering that with to-morrow's joyless sun, the same dull round begins again!!"

Mrs. Ritson.—Mrs. Ritson was an English lady who, at the beginning of the last century, spent some eight years in Alexandria and Norfolk. Like many another foreign visitor since her day, she gave her impressions of America in a book, which she calls A Poetical Picture. It is a sort of metrical diary, in which a clever woman gives a graphic portrayal of social conditions as they existed a hundred years ago—conditions of which faint traces may possibly be discovered to-day. It was published in London in 1809.

Mrs. Ritson was moved to undertake the *Poetical Picture*, not merely through a love of literary fame, but also through the laudable desire to benefit her fellow-countrymen. "The recital

in the following pages," she says in her preface, "contains a narrative of domestic occurrences, and may be useful to those who have occasion to cross the Atlantic; it may serve also as a check to many who, dissatisfied with their lot here, imagine that change of place will insure happiness and procure wealth: experience teaches wisdom; and many a discontented wanderer finds, too late, that he has sacrificed real liberty to an imaginary idol; and that labor is everywhere necessary to obtain subsistence." She anticipates the criticism that her narrative is not very flattering to the American people. "But Virginians," she says, "must acknowledge the truth of every assertion. I relate only what I saw; and have confined my descriptions to the places where I long resided."

In Alexandria, where our author first resided, she was not favorably impressed by the atmosphere of elegant and abounding leisure. Virginia had not yet assumed the energy of strenuous life. In Alexandria our critic found—

"That all was quiet, all serene,
Nothing like traffic to be seen;
Loitering the men were always found,
And any idle tale went round,
That gave a change to the dull face
Of every mortal in the place."

But she does ample justice to their hospitality and love of good cheer, particularly in the early part of winter,—

"When all the folks who love good eating, And think of little else but treating, With pleasure oft their lips will smack, When speaking of a canvas back."

The Virginian's love of fine horses and of the excitements of the race-track, as it existed in that older day, did not escape our censor's keen observation. Speaking of the race-track near Norfolk, she says:—

"A race is a Virginian's pleasure,
For which they always can find leisure;
For that they leave their farm and home,
From every quarter they can come;
With gentle, simple, rich, and poor,
The race-ground soon is covered o'er;
Negroes the gaming spirit take,
And bet and wager every stake.
Males, females, all, both black and white,
Together at this sport unite."

She notes the gay, social nature of the people, who delight in dancing and would "jig with pleasure every night." She recognizes Virginia cleverness, yet observes that many who engage in these festive gayeties are neither brilliant nor scholarly. In fact, it seems to her that wisdom and culture are by no means necessary for social recognition and success:—

"But wit and sense, and such wise things, Need not attend on fiddle-strings; For if the lad can foot it well, And flatteringly some nonsense tell, Has a few negroes and plantation, He's wise as many in the nation; Among the fair may pick and choose, As few a husband will refuse."

Paul Henkel.—With Paul Henkel the poetic muse first appears west of the Blue Ridge. In him the sturdy German element of the population of Virginia found its earliest metrical utterance. He was a worthy representative of a strong race—stalwart in body as in soul. He was born December 15, 1754, in Rowan County, N. C., but after preparing himself for the ministry of the Lutheran Church, he located at New Market,

Va., and became a devoted missionary throughout the Shenandoah Valley and in Southwestern Virginia. He visited the scattered communities of German Lutherans throughout this region, catechised the young, administered the sacraments, and wherever possible, organized congregations. In all this work, his ability and zeal made him eminently successful.

In the course of time he became identified with the larger interests of the Lutheran Church. In 1803 he was active in organizing the North Carolina Synod; in 1818 he took part in the organization of the Ohio Synod; and in 1820 he was a leader in the organization of the Tennessee Synod. From New Market as a starting-point, he made missionary tours, not only through the parts of Virginia already mentioned, but also through Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. These long journeys were usually made on horseback, and were attended with great discomfort and danger. But with a truly Pauline spirit, he toiled on with indomitable energy.

At the same time he was abundant in literary labors, which aimed at the edification of the church. He made use both of the German and the English language. He was a strict adherent to the faith of the Augsburg Confession, and in 1809 published a work on Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The following year he prepared a German hymn-book, and several years later, an English hymn-book. In 1814 he published a German catechism, which was soon after put into English. From all this it is apparent that he was a great indefatigable worker.

But our principal concern with this author relates to a little volume of German poems, Kurzer Zeitvertreib, which was first published in 1810. It quickly ran through several editions—a popularity indicative of some sort of unusual merit. Not many of the volumes reviewed in the present work were ever honored with a second edition. As indicated on the title page,

the poems composing this volume, which were written during the author's great pioneer missionary labors, were not to be received with undue seriousness. It was intended as a Zeitvertreib—a "Brief Pastime," with which to while away a pleasant half hour. But earnest preacher as he was, the poet did not write for mere amusement any more than for mere art's sake. His purpose was to inculcate the principles of sound morality and a manner of life consistent with Christian character. The moral aim is carried out in an effective and popular manner, in which sturdy sense and honest sentiment take the place of poetic fancy and poetic art. Many of the brief lyrics were intended to be sung, and the entire collection must have exerted a salutary influence among the early German settlers of Virginia and other states.

The first lyric in the book is entitled *Heathenish Housekeeping*, of which two stanzas are here translated in the measure and rhyme of the original:—

"How oft we hear the sad complaint
That Christian men are living
Like heathen who without restraint
Their lives to sloth are giving,
And live in sloth their whole life long,
Just like the copper-colored throng
Of squalid, lazy Indians.

"While sons and fathers hug the fire,
And winds each window rattle,
The mother trudges to the byre,
To tend the horse and cattle.
The lazy louts their places hold,
Nor budge an inch, though chilled with cold
In comes the faithful mother."

Our preacher-poet has a Warning to Maidens, in which he urges them to caution in choosing a husband. They are not to

let themselves be imposed upon by fine clothes and smooth address; for unions with a no more substantial basis are apt to prove disastrous:—

"Ye maidens all I bid beware,
There's much in life to harm you;
In marriage have a special care,
Lest worthless rascals charm you;
That man is surely not the best
Whose talk is false and flattering jest—
His smoothness should alarm you."

This faithful preacher holds up a Mirror for Brandy-Lovers, in which he shows the harmful effects of that popular beverage, and warns mothers against the prevalent habit of giving it to infants. He sums up the matter in the last stanza:—

"I pray you therefore stop and think
Before you form a taste for drink:
It has no use in daily food,
Its taste is surely not so good;
Ah no; its bane consumes the frame,
And ends too soon life's heavenly flame.
Oh then, for love of life, forego
This fatal source of pain and woe."

These extracts will serve to illustrate the manner and themes of this preacher-poet. Good sense, manly sentiment, telling illustrations, and biting wit—qualities that at once arrested the attention and convinced the judgment—justly rendered these lyrics popular. Paul Henkel died in 1825, and is buried in New Market. His great-grandsons still conduct there a publishing house which, in its long history, has rendered valuable service to religion and the State.

Judith Lomax .- The fair authoress of The Notes of an

American Lyre, published in Richmond in 1813, informs us on the title page that she was "a native of Virginia." The little volume in question beautifully illustrates the delicate culture of that good old time before the "new woman" was dreamed of, or the gentle housewife ventured upon a thought beyond the sweet domestic sphere. The sensitive spirit of Miss Judith Lomax responded quickly to every poetic appeal. The gift of a tuberose inspired at least a quatrain, and the presentation of a lock of hair evoked a whole poem.

In place of criticism, the interesting preface is given in full: "Strange! that a timid Female, borne on Fancy's wing, should dare to soar aloft to the Muses! But no, the little productions of my pen deserve not to be dignified with the title of Poetry; they are only the little effusions of a guileless heart, which momentary occasions, and perhaps a too romantic imagination, have given rise to, whilst I, fond of scribbling, have sought amusement in my leisure moments by transmitting them to paper. Perhaps none of them can stand the test of criticism; and some were written at the early period of childhood. Indeed this volume is nothing more than a Note Book, which has long been the repository of all the wayward fancies and poetic flights of a mind prone to enthusiasm. Those pieces in the first part of the book are the first flights of a youthful mind, and may, perhaps, be most exceptionable, as being most trifling."

The following Address from a Mole to a young lady who called the cats to destroy it, will serve for illustration of our author's range and art:—

"Lo! trembling at your feet,
Your pity I entreat,
And beg that tortures you will spare;
For life I do not sue,
Life I'll not ask of you,
For you'd not grant it, cruel fair!

"But ere it is too late,
And ere I meet my fate,
Oh, let me tell thee, fair divine!
That Pity's pearly tear,
To Beauty should be dear,
For soft it makes the eye to shine."

Daniel Bryan.—This author was a native of Rockingham County, where his father, an emigrant from Pennslyvania, had located in 1744. He was named after Daniel Boone, whose labors and adventures as a pioneer he was to sing later in elaborate strains. He was a graduate of Washington College at Lexington, Va., from which he carried to his rural home a self-sacrificing devotion to the poetic muse. He lamented the prosaic, utilitarian spirit by which he was surrounded, and conscientiously withheld himself "from the orbit of lucrative exertion."

He was not without apprehensions that his persistent poetic dreaming might "disseminate for him the seeds of a harvest of penury and melancholy." Indeed, there were prosaic, unsympathetic friends who admonished him about the unwisdom of his ways. But with the noble enthusiasm of conscious genius, he preferred his poetic raptures to the accumulation of sordid lucre. "Infatuated," he says, "as may be considered the son of poverty, who, while thousands around him are sedulously occupied in gathering riches from the golden sand-banks of fortune, loiters from the crowd to listen to the lays of the grove, to gaze on the sparkling of a stream, or to pluck the flowers which spangle its borders; yet would he not forego the felicity of his lonely ramble and simple amusements, for all the glittering accumulations of their toil."

He appreciated the grand poetic possibilities to be found in American scenery, institutions, and achievements, and deplored the general and callous neglect of the muses. His glowing fancy suggested achievements that would eclipse the literary glory of the Old World. "Who," he asks, "that has a soul susceptible of ennobling sensations, can ramble through Columbia's forests, hear the roar of her rivers, gaze on the grandeur of her mountains, and muse on her glorious liberties, without breaking forth into the rhapsodies of divinest enthusiasm? Yet, how few there are in this section of her republic, who have ventured to resound in verse the praise of her charms or the honors of her distinguished sons! A thousand times has the author beheld in fancy the genius of Columbian poesy standing on the wildest cliffs of Alleghany, tuning the tear-twinkling chords of her lyre, and warbling at intervals, unheeded, the sweetest raptures of inspiration; while the wasted strains, thrown from hill to hill, sunk and expired in the tenderest murmurs of neglect."

In later years, as with most of us, the hard realities of life happily cured our author of his idle, dreamy sentimentalism, and he became a substantial and useful citizen. Perhaps this reformation was due in part to his good wives, for he was twice married. He moved from Rockingham to Alexandria, where he was postmaster for about thirty years. His descendants have filled honorable stations in the service of their country.

Bryan was the author of several poetical works, among which may be mentioned an Appeal for Suffering Genius (1826) and Thoughts (1830). But The Mountain Muse, published at Harrisonburg in 1813, from the preface of which the foregoing quotations are taken, claims our chief consideration. It is a well-meant but pathetic effort to weave the adventures of Daniel Boone into an epic nearly as long as the Aeneid. It finds its starting-point beyond the Garden of Eden,—

"When first their dark and yet untraveled rounds Through the inane expanse of pristine night The planetary conglobations rolled." At a council of seraphs held in "a firmamental hall erected on the summit of the Alleghany," the hero was selected for the exploration and settlement of Kentucky. The nominating seraph, whose name is Enterprise, pronounces a eulogy that would do credit to a national political convention. A few lines will make this statement clear:—

"Generous, guileless, kind,
The gripe of sneaking Avarice ne'er compressed
His princely heart. No mean dissembling smiles,
Nor smooth, deceitful speech, his views conceal,
Nor form a feint, his unsuspecting friends
Within a venal snare to lure. He gives
To modest indigence, with bounteous will,
A liberal portion of his little store.
The ostentatious pageantry of power,
The moon-shine splendors of high-titled birth,
And fluttering fashion's vain, fantastic pomp,
For his sage mind, no more attractions have,
Than shining gossamers upon the winds,
Or glittering froth, upon the turbid streams."

Then follows through the six remaining books, of eight or nine hundred lines each, a sufficiently authentic account of the adventures and achievements of the Kentucky pioneer. But it is all in vain; far greater learning and higher poetic gifts could not remove the painful discord between the simple, prosaic facts of pioneer life and the lofty strains of epic poetry.

Dr. Wharton.—The Virginia Wreath, consisting, as the title page informs us, of original poems, was published at Winchester, Va., in 1814. The author, John Wharton, M. D., was from Stevensburg in Culpeper County. He went abroad in 1803, and studied medicine at Edinburgh, where he became president of the Royal Physical Society. Subsequently he returned to his native place to practice his profession; and no doubt his wish

to be buried in the family grave-yard, by the side of a loved brother and sister, was fulfilled:—

"There, when I die, let me too be conveyed;
There let my friends some pious drops bestow;
Then, 'mid my kindred, let my dust be laid,
And o'er my grave let spring's first roses grow."

Like many others at that period, when poetic authorship was not regarded as a very creditable thing, Dr. Wharton was persuaded by his friends, as he tells us, to publish his verse. He recognized the justice of the Horatian maxim that "neither men, nor gods, nor booksellers' shops tolerate mediocre poets." "And certainly, after a declaration like this," he continues, "it is with a foreboding heart, and trembling step, that he approaches the temple of Apollo, or essays to pluck from the Parnassian wreath one solitary sprig to adorn his humble brow."

His themes are classical, patriotic, and personal. There is nothing remarkable about his verse; it is in thought and expression about what an educated physician of his day might be expected to write. Here is a brief poem *On Orpheus' Lyre*:—

"When Orpheus strikes his heavenly lyre,
Sure every breast must feel poetic fire!
The gods themselves, with grateful joy, attend,
While aerial oaks their cloud-topt summits bend;
For who can listen to Amphion's 1 art,
But feels sweet transports thrill his raptured heart."

The Ode to Columbia, which is not without merit, concludes with a eulogy of Washington:—

"Immortal laurels o'er thy grave shall bloom,
While Freedom's sons will on the mournful tomb
These words inscribe: Here rests beneath this stone
A greater man than ever filled a throne."

<sup>&</sup>quot; Said to be one of the inventors of music." (Dr. Wharton's note).

A prelude to the War of 1812 may be found in *The Sailor*, who exclaims, as he toils imprisoned on a British ship:—

"Rise, vengeance, rise! awake from sleep,
Unfurl thy banners—quickly fly
To tame the usurpers of the deep,
And hush the widowed mother's sigh."

Richard Dabney.—The author of *Poems, Original and Translated*, was a native of Louisa county, where he was brought up on a farm. His name, originally D'Aubigné, connects him with the Huguenots of France. Though he never had the advantage of a collegiate training, he became, through diligent private study, a good classical scholar. He enjoyed the large convivial hospitality of the baronial plantations in his part of the state. Had he yielded less to convivial temptations—

"He might have won the meed of fame, Essayed and reached a worthier aim."

In the introduction of the volume above referred to, which was published in 1815, Dabney quotes with approval a principle of art laid down by Alison: "In all the fine arts, that composition is most excellent, in which the different parts most fully unite in the production of one unmingled emotion, and that taste the most perfect, when the perception of this relation of objects, in point of expression, is most delicate and precise." He therefore "submits to public consideration a species of composition which he ventures to denominate the moral miniature painting of poetry; inasmuch as the exertions of the graphic art are generally restricted to a single point in relation to time, and to a paucity of objects, in relation to expression."

The effort to follow this principle, as well as the taste developed by a study of the ancient classics, has given to Dabney's poems a unity and conciseness very unusual at the time he wrote. His literary art is excellent; and had he allowed himself greater freedom and wider range in the choice of subjects, his publisher would hardly have complained of a losing venture, nor would his poems have been entirely forgotten. A single quotation must suffice. The little poem Spring is intended to illustrate "that state of mind, which cannot be excited by objects of beauty to the train of thought constituted by ideas of emotion."

"I view not, in thy opening flowers,
O spring, the signs of gay delight;
And see not, 'midst thy genial showers,
The young life bursting into light.

"For I have viewed those opening flowers,
And revelled in that gay delight,
In happy scenes and peaceful hours,
That never more can charm my sight.

"Then keep thy smiles, and keep thy pleasure;
Thy bloom, thy vernal joy impart
To those, who own that sacred treasure
The blessing of a quiet heart.

"Dear winter's frown that darkly lowers,
O'er Nature's form, with gloom opprest,
Than all thy smiles and rosy hours,
Is more congenial to my heart."

#### III

# FIRST NATIONAL PERIOD

(1815-1861)

#### CHAPTER VII

# Social Condition and Early Writers

The first national period, which extends from the close of the War of 1812 to the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, exhibits marvelous progress. The arduous tasks imposed upon the people during the Colonial and Revolutionary period had been successfully achieved. The dreams of our forefathers began to be realized. They caught clearer glimpses of that future of our country, in which, as Hegel said, "the burden of the world's history shall reveal itself."

With the establishment of peace in 1815, the United States entered upon an unparalleled era of prosperity. The development of the country went forward with great rapidity. An increasing tide of immigration, chiefly from Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany, swept to our shores. The great valley of the Mississippi was occupied; trade and manufacture built up flourishing towns and cities; excellent highways, railroads, and steamboat lines facilitated interstate communication. The population of our country increased from 8,438,000 in 1815 to 32,000,000 in 1861, thus equaling the leading nations of Europe. In the wonderful material development of this period, Virginia had a share.

The intellectual culture of the people kept pace with their material expansion. Education received increasing attention; and during the period under consideration, no fewer than one hundred and forty-nine colleges were established in different parts of our country. Of these Virginia had a goodly number, which have exerted an incalculable influence upon the culture and welfare of the State. The University of Virginia, the child of Jefferson, was founded in 1819; Randolph-Macon College, in 1832; Emory and Henry College, in 1838; the Virginia Military Institute, in 1839; Richmond College, in 1840; and Roanoke College, in 1852. Hampden-Sidney College and Washington College—now Washington and Lee University—had been established toward the close of the preceding century. Though there was no vigorous public school system, parental solicitude and private enterprise made more or less liberal provision for the instruction of the young of both sexes.

The periodical press of our country, during the first national period, became a powerful agency both in the diffusion of knowledge and the promotion of letters. Some of our ablest writers—Bryant, Poe, Whittier and Lowell—served as editors. Virginia shared in this great intellectual movement; and as a result every important town in the State—Alexandria, Richmond, Norfolk, Petersburg, Charlottesville, Staunton, Lynchburg—could boast of its newspapers.

During this period Richmond became the chief literary center of Virginia, and with the possible exception of Charleston, the chief literary center of the South. It was the home of Poe during his earlier years, and of the Southern Literary Messenger, in its day the most influential magazine south of the Potomac. It was founded, as set forth in its first issue in 1834, to encourage literature in Virginia and the other states of the South; and during its career of thirty years, it stimulated literary activity in a remarkable degree. Among its contributors we find Poe, Simms, Hayne, Timrod, John Esten Cooke, John R. Thompson, and others—a galaxy of the best known names in Southern literature

The establishment of the Republic naturally undermined the

old aristocratic regime in Virginia. The abolition of entailed estates gradually destroyed the former baronial organization of society. The spirit of democratic equality, which had found a voice in the Declaration of Independence, gained a prevalent strength. "Dress and manners," as John Esten Cooke tells us in his Virginia, "underwent a change. The aristocratic planter of the eighteenth century, with his powder and silk stockings, gave place to the democratic citizen, with his plain clothes and plain manners. The theories of Jefferson, who received the name of the 'Apostle of Democracy,' were adopted as the rule of society, and pervaded the entire community. Class distinctions were ignored as a remnant of social superstition."

The period under consideration was one of considerable literary activity in Virginia. The various departments of prosebiography, history, fiction, science, law-were all represented by notable works. Wirt's Life of Patrick Henry (1817) gives a glowing portrait of the eloquent patriot. The Life and Times of James Madison, by William C. Reeves (1859), dwells with delight on the Cavalier origin of Virginia society. Howison and Campbell wrote interesting histories of the Old Dominion. Bishop Meade's well-known work, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families, throws much light on the genealogical history of the State. Matthew Fontaine Maury won international fame by his Physical Geography of the Sea; while Dr. Archibald Alexander became one of the foremost of American theologians. In the Cavaliers of Virginia William A. Carruthers described Bacon's Rebellion, and in the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe, Spotswood's march to the mountains. The Partisan Leader, a political novel by Judge Beverley Tucker, was a sort of prophecy, which found at least a partial fulfilment in the secession of the Southern States and in the Civil War that followed. During this same period, nearly

fifty volumes of poetry, most of which here find historical record for the first time, were issued from the press.

William Maxwell.—William Maxwell was a native of Norfolk, Va. After graduating at Yale College, he practiced law in his native city, and gradually rose to eminence for his ability and legal attainments. He served several terms in the legislature of Virginia, and afterwards filled for six years (1838-1844) the office of president of Hampden-Sidney College. He was deeply interested in the antiquities of the State, and in 1848 established the Virginia Historical Register, of which he edited the first six volumes.

In 1812 he published a volume of *Poems*, which four years later (1816), he brought out in a revised and enlarged form. It is this second edition that forms the basis of the present study. To Maxwell, as might be inferred from his busy and useful life, poetry was merely an avocation. So he says to the Muse,—

"I ask not fame—content to be unknown—
I only woo thee for thyself alone;
And fondly trifle with the tuneful art,
To please my fancy, and indulge my heart."

It is a mistake to suppose that the present indifference to poetry is a new thing. In *The Bards of Columbia* our author laments the neglect with which the muses are treated. This neglect—far too general in *ante-bellum* days—is the excuse he makes to President Dwight for not writing more:—

"Why should he write in these prosaic times, When few, if any, care a fig for rhymes?"

Yet he felt that the bard, though perhaps not equal to the warrior or statesman, still "deserved his share of praise."

"He spurs the hero to romantic deeds, And soothes his manly sorrow while he bleeds; On ready wings he flies to virtue's aid, Knight-errant to the sweet, forsaken maid.

'Tis he who wins the little school-boy's ear,
Or cheats the maiden of a gracious tear;
Instructs the lawyer in his winning art,
And helps the lover to his lady's heart.
With oily words he calms the Passions' rage,
Delights gay youth, and soothes declining age;
With pious strains prepares the saint to die,
And wafts the spirit to her native sky."

The War of 1812 finds place in several spirited pieces, but none is better than the Naval Song:—

"Come all ye tars that brave the sea,
Now hear Columbia's call.

Her glorious banner soon shall be
Our canopy or pall.

We rush to meet the vaunting foe,
And lay his proud ambition low.
Columbia's gallant tars
Shall range the ocean free,
And bear her union stars
In triumph o'er the sea.

"We fight with no ambitious aim
To rule the waves alone;
Nor to destroy another's claim,
But to maintain our own;
And those base chains of servile fear
We would not give, we will not wear.
Columbia's gallant tars, etc.

"Contending for our equal right,
Against usurping pride,
We war with unresisted might,
For Heaven is on our side;

And 'tis no mortal hand, we know,
That aims our thunders at the foe.
Columbia's gallant tars, etc."

Of the tales, fables and love-songs of the book it is not necessary to speak. They are about what a man of literary taste and culture would write, if he chose to amuse himself in that way.

Joseph Thomas.—The author of A Poetical Descant on the Primeval and Present State of Mankind, published in Winchester in 1816, was a minister of the gospel, as he informs us on the title page. As might therefore be expected, the "Poetical Descant" is pervaded by a deeply religious spirit and an unexceptionable orthodoxy. In its scope and theme the poem belongs to the epic class; and in its general purpose, though hardly in its execution, it resembles Pollok's Course of Time. It begins with the golden age of man's primeval condition, when—

"Time was young,
And man, the beasts, and all in glory sung."

It introduces, after the manner of Milton, the temptation in Eden, by which the state of man was changed:—

"The serpent now which crawls in dust and shame Was then a beast of note and handsome frame."

Next follows a general and unrelieved view of the miseries of mankind:—

"Distresses rise and spread their bane, And find all classes with their pain; Some are naked, wretched, hungry, poor, And thousands beg from door to door." Other cantos, which are called sections, review in succession the sorrowful history of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Last of all, America claims consideration, and light falls, for the first time, on the picture. The soil, climate, history, and institutions of our country are the subjects of much laudatory verse:—

> "Our land a refuge is for all distrest, By nature's hand most bountifully blest; See midland seas and broader lakes display Their glittering glories to the beams of day."

In the poem history is brought down to date, for the author sings the happy conclusion of the War of 1812. But no ideal state of happiness and virtue follows in the path of victory:—

"Tho' war has ceased, and plenty smiles around, Great discontent and murmurs now abound, Our selfish souls so avaricious grown,

'Gainst Heaven's high will we utter out the moan."

In the concluding cantos, the poet justly contends that peace and happiness are to be found alone in the practice of virtue and piety. There is a flamboyant description of the end of the world, in which we find an abundance of interesting and sublime detail:—

"The bursting comets make a horrid crash."

This remarkable epic is preceded by a somewhat elaborate preface, in which the author explains his general view of mankind. In his survey of the world, he dwells both upon national and individual life. "The author," he says, "contemplates the nations of his species as the raging billows that undulate the bosom of the deep. One rises, foams, rages, climbs, and increases with continued rapidity, and threatens for a while to swallow up its inferiors, and take the boundless main for its empire; but as it increases its size, it adds to its own weight,

it moves slower, the wind subsides, its strength is exhausted; over-burdened it sinks, it dies away, and is itself lost in the boundless waste of waters. . . .

"Man, as an individual, is considered as a bee, who, in the morning of summer's calm sunshine, takes his flight to an extensive field of melliferous flowers, blossoms and roses; with avidity he flies to the loved prospect; in haste he sips at each till he is fully loaded; then, with all the accelerations of his might, returns home and there hoards the fruit of his assiduous toil. Thus the day—the whole summer, and autumn is taken up in the incessant going, laboring, and returning, till he has richly supplied his cone with life's luxurious sweets—all this, not for himself but often for his murderers, and generally for those who neither care for, regard his labors, nor thank him for his gains; and who in the riot of his spoils, if they be somewhat scant, execrate him for his misfortunes, and deride him for his poverty." All this will be recognized as a rather atrabilious way of looking at life.

Mrs. Davis.—Martha Ann Davis wrote the *Poems of Laura*, an Original American Work, which was published in Petersburg in 1818. She honestly thought she was making a contribution to American literature, the poverty of which she laments and excuses. "It must be acknowledged," she says in the preface, "that the Muse of our country is yet in its infancy; the productions of native genius have held out to us only the bright promise of future eminence; and it is in the progress of time that we must hope for the consummation of its excellence."

The opening poem is A Simple Sketch of Laura's Past and Present Life, from which we learn that she lived,—

"In rural cot where honey-suckles twined,
With woodbine, rose, and jessamine combined;
Where each fond heart was to the other true,
And where the hours winged with affection flew."

The poetic impulse, as with many gifted children of song, came early; for, as she tells us,—

"At twelve years old she often tried a rhyme, And oft was pleased to hear her verses chime."

The early death of her father cut short the education for which she sighed. At the age of fourteen she felt the raptures of reciprocal affection, in which no embarrassment was caused by an unduly coy and maidenly reserve:—

"When evening shades stole o'er the cottage hill, For him she watched until her blood ran chill; They met with smiles at the dear humble door; No two were happier, though they both were poor. They'd sit and chat the cheerful hours away, And when he'd go, she wished he still could stay; He'd press her fondly to his faithful heart, While both regretted they were forced to part."

Marriage followed after a prudent delay of five years; "little cherubs" came; death invaded the home circle; but amid the joys and sorrows of life, she still pursued her verse-making on unpretentious themes:—

"Virtue, fair friendship, truth and love sincere, And calm content in moss-grown cottage dear; 'The lisping babes that prattle on the knee With rosy cheeks and bosoms full of glee;' The tender husband, fond, humane, and kind, Within whose breast each virtue is confined, Are the loved themes that give her bosom joy, And still will be, till time the ties destroy[s].

Reflections on Pleasure, written the year the volume was published, may be taken as representing her modest poetic gifts at their full maturity. The first three stanzas are given:—

"Ah! pleasure's but an empty charm,
A vision fleeting as 'tis gay;
We slumber in the pleasing maze,
Till like a dream it fades away.

Ye thoughtless gay, can pleasure flow From splendid halls or gay attire? Can they that peace of mind bestow, Which leaves the heart without desire?

Ah, no, for in retirement dwells

The heart's best pleasure—sweet content;
There the calm bosom glows with joy,

For envy there can ne'er torment."

Mrs. Davis seems to have exemplified this ideal in her own life; and though she was deprived of the enjoyments that wealth, high intellectual culture, and contact with the larger interests of the world are apt to bring, the simple piety of her humble sphere of thought and activity is not without an enviable charm.

William Branch, Jr.—William Branch, Jr., the author of a poem on Life, which was published in Richmond in 1819, was a native of Prince Edward County, Va. From lack of means he was prevented from acquiring a collegiate education; but through private study he attained no mean degree of culture. To use his own words, "I consulted my inclination to improve and become happy, by devoting myself to literary research amid the shades of tranquil obscurity, to which, through my insuperable fondness for rural delights, I now feel completely wedded."

The poem Life, which is "dedicated to the social and political welfare of the people of the United States," is divided into three books. The first book, as the author explains, treats of "infancy, or that period of life, during which the infant continues under the sole care of the mother;" the second treats of youth and education; the third, of "manhood, or the stage of

life during which man enjoys his greatest strength of body and vigor of mind, and is most engaged in business." In regard to education, the author adopts the system of Pestalozzi, which teaches things in place of words:—

"Not shades, but things he learns in early youth, Much more concerned for essences and truth, Than how they should be painted or expressed, Or in what gaudy equipages dressed; Much more inclined to show things as they are, With all relations that they justly bear, Than misdeem wisdom, nature's course arraign, And prove that Providence is right in vain."

This long didactic poem, the verse and quality of which may be judged from the preceding quotation, was written, not for art's sake alone, but also for a definite moral purpose. "I have in this irregular little poem," the author tells us, "endeavored to suggest some useful hints and considerations with regard to the moral and literary culture of the juvenile mind." It describes, as indicated on the title page, the various characters in life, the different passions with their moral influence, the good and evil resulting from their sway, and, in short, the perfect man.

In his preliminary address "to a generous public," our author criticises the critics, and incidentally reveals a rare, imperturbable amiability of character. "Critics, I have observed," he says, "generally build themselves up at the expense of others, and live on foundations not their own; they are the lions; and authors, their obedient jackals. They deal out strictures liberally on all, and yet they are sometimes useful.

"The philological critic, who preys on verbiage, is very beneficial to the literary world, for he sifts words, scrutinizes phrases, forms, and styles, and settles the exact standard weight and measure of language; but the moral critic is yet more useful, for he anatomizes the moral principles of every writing, and shows the good and evil which would result from their adoption and exercise.

"I shall always be gratified to see the good-natured critic bring his philosophical feelings to bear on this rude little bouquet; and should ever the envious and virulent detractor attempt to please his peculiar taste, by plucking out some offensive flower in this rustic collection, he is at liberty to exert his power; and if he cannot rest satisfied until his gall and spleen be vented, I shall rejoice to see him discharge his venom; for I am always highly pleased to behold every man disburthened and happy. Such persons may rest assured that when they become cheerful, I shall be the very last man in the world to disturb their tranquillity."

Our author emphasizes the salutary teaching of Washington and Jefferson that the permanency and prosperity of this great nation depend on the intelligence and virtue of the people. "We live," he says, "in a country, whose rights and privileges, whose liberty, laws, and religion, depend upon the culture and exercise of virtue. It therefore becomes the duty of every man, who breathes the exhilarating air of freedom; who lives in the centre and soul of our liberal institutions; and who has secured by them, his life, liberty, property, and enjoyment—it becomes the sacred duty of every man, who is protected by the whole, to qualify himself to assist in protecting the whole. This can be done with propriety and effect only by cultivating our virtue, upon which depends our union; together with a correct and useful exertion of our physical energies."

#### CHAPTER VIII

#### Writers of the Third Decade

Bernard M. Carter.—In 1824 there appeared in London a small volume of *Poems*, which were written, as the title page informs us, by Bernard M. Carter, of Virginia. It is a revision and enlargement of A Medley, a poem published there the preceding year. The volume in question contains a medley treatment of American statesmen—Washington, Randolph, Hamilton, Adams, Lee; an elegy on the death of "Agnes," which a foot-note tells us was "the late lamented Miss Lewis, of Virginia;" and glowing eulogies of Byron and Moore. There is also a poem *Pocahontas*.

The poet did not possess the gift of lucidity. It is not always easy to get at his meaning, for his ideas are wrapped in fold upon fold of obscure verbiage. Yet he was not without a classical training. The following tribute to Lafayette will show his style at its best:—

"There too from o'er the distant main
Was Gallia's warlike son,
To wear the laurels of the plain,
Where Freedom broke the tyrant's chain,
With arm of Washington!
And Pallas waited on
The young Euryalus—and Fame
Her Fabian garland won."

Elwes.—The title page of *The Potomac Muse* tells us that the volume was written by "a lady of Virginia." It is copyrighted by A. W. Elwes, whose name we have placed in the marginal title. It is a book of 172 pages, and was printed in

Richmond in 1825. The opening poem is *Virginia*, which naturally lauds the great sons of the State—Washington, Wirt, Henry, Lee, Jefferson, and others—all in due historic order.

"There, first of eloquence the spirit rose,
There, genius still her ready smile bestows,
With every boon her boundless powers create
To deck the mind, or soul to elevate."

The poem entitled *The Banks of the Potomac* celebrates the charms of the author's early home. It is full of the tender recollections that are so apt to come to us in later years:—

"Yet still thou art smiling, blest seat of my childhood,
Fair assemblage of presents from nature's full store;
Thy waters, thy hills, and thy vales, and thy wild wood,
And thy moss-covered rocks, and thy bold waving shore."

This of course has a suspicious resemblance to Woodworth's famous song; but imitation is a weakness that is too frequently observable in the poetry of Virginia, particularly in the days before the Civil War.

The Potomac Muse contains a number of "Fragments" and some personal poems. The best piece in the book is perhaps The Sunbeam, which is here inserted in full:—

"As lately wandering, all alone,
Where aged rocks, with moss o'ergrown,
Frown o'er Potomac's wave,
The parting sun shone bright and clear,
And beaming on the waters fair,
A transient lustre gave.

"With hasty footstep then I sought
To reach the gay and sparkling spot,
Where played the brilliant beam;
As I approached it quick withdrew,
I followed—still it farther flew,
Fast o'er the lordly stream.

"Thus does the charmed enthusiast view,
In smiling youth, each varied hue,
With which fair Fancy's hand
Full many a rosy prospect decks;
But vain the visionary seeks
This blooming promised land."

Hiram Haines.—The author of Mountain Buds and Blossoms, Wove in a Rustic Garland, was Hiram Haines, editor and proprietor of the American Constitution, a newspaper published in Petersburg. He was a native of Culpeper County; and from the two-page preface of the volume before us, we learn that he was brought up to follow the plow, and that his education did not rise above that usually acquired in rural schools. Mountain Buds and Blossoms was published in early manhood—"inexperienced youth" he calls it—and on this ground he bases a plea for friendly consideration.

The critics of that time—the book was printed in 1825—must have been a particularly venomous set, of whom the poet stood in trembling awe. In addressing them in his introduction, Haines says: "With you, flattery must beget disgust; servility, contempt; and I would add, defiance, from so humble an author as myself, would at best excite your pity, most likely your mirth. Adopting, then, an intermediate course, I approach you with all the respect due your characters and profession, and at the same time with that firm and fearless independence, which should ever characterize the actions of a free-born Virginian."

The first poem of the collection is called *The Virginiad*. It covers thirty-seven pages, and as its name implies, celebrates the beauty of scenery and heroism of character found in the Old Dominion. The author was intensely loyal to his native State. "Born and reared in the Old Dominion," he says, "I wish never to go permanently beyond its boundaries. Breath-

ing with delight its mild salubrious atmosphere, I wish to inhale that of no other clime. Treading on its hallowed soil in life, let me rest beneath it in death." This poem is remarkable as the first attempt to celebrate adequately the glories of the State.

The poem is written in twelve-line stanzas, which show more than ordinary power of language and description. It begins with an apostrophe to Virginia, and a general description of its geographic features:—

"Virginia, hail! thou loveliest land on earth,
Land of the great, of beauty, and rare worth;
Each heart that bears the impress of thy name,
Beats high to climb the rugged steeps of fame."

The various rivers of the eastern part of the State—the Potomac, York, James, Elizabeth—each fills one or more stanzas. The towns and cities—Richmond, "by nature blessed as 'tis adorned by art;" Norfolk, "varied in form but sweet the face she wears;" Williamsburg—

"Here fashion dwelt and highly polished ease, Unrivaled breeding, practised but to please;"

and "fair Petersburg"-

"Whose hand is opened and whose bosom glows, To give relief and calm the sufferer's woes"—

are all worthily and impartially celebrated.

The Appomattox suggests the heroic and pathetic story of—

"Fair Pocahontas, of exalted mind,
"And race as noble as her heart was kind."

Perhaps the best part of The Virginiad is the Indian maiden's love-song, which she tenderly sighed to the moon:—

"I love thee, sweet orb, in thy beauty now beaming,
Mild emblem of peace, and queen of the night;
Upon my warm bosom thy calm looks are gleaming,
But ah! they view not my bosom's delight:
Oh! not like thy course is its love ever ranging;
As vestal's fire pure, so burns its first flame;
Nor yet as thy face, will it ever be changing,
A hundred new moons shall find it the same.

"I love the white warrior from over the water,

He's brave in the fight and kind to his foe;

And the heart that is these will slight not the daughter

Of the red chieftain who bears the strong bow;

The necklace he gave me is the color of heaven,

Our priests oft tell us that all there is love;

And sure 'tis not wrong, when the power is given,

That earth should be like the regions above.

"I'll weave for my love a gay wampum belt shining
With bright coral shells, so lovely and fair;
And I'll bind him a crest together entwining
The pelican's plumage with my waving hair.
Oh! then to him quick I smiling will bear them,
On his brow and arms my hands shall them braid;
That when he's away the fair warrior may wear them,
And look and remember his dark Indian maid."

## Among the heroic names-

"Which freed a nation that should awe the world "-

the poem celebrates Henry, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, and others, who are portrayed with fine discrimination.

In the score or more of lyrics that make up the rest of the volume we find a poetic talent worthy of admiration. The author's poetic skill, which had been formed in the school of Campbell and Burns, rarely fails in measure, diction, or rhyme; and if space permitted, many passages worth reading might be

introduced from Things I Love, Things I Hate, Our Last Earthly Comforts, and similar homely themes.

John Robertson.—John Robertson was born near Richmond in 1787. He was educated at William and Mary College, and afterwards achieved distinction as a lawyer and statesman. He filled for a time the office of Attorney-general of Virginia, and served several terms (1833-1839) in Congress. He died in Campbell County, Va., in 1873, at a very advanced age.

He found relaxation from the duties of a busy life in poetical composition, and published three books at intervals of about twenty-five years. The first was a metrical romance entitled Virginia, or the Fatal Patent. It appeared in Washington in 1825. The fatal patent referred to is that of James I. to the London Company; for it meant ultimately the severance of this land from the British crown—a severance that was to take place only after bitterness and bloodshed. The hero of the romance is Captain John Smith; and of course the noble-minded Pocahontas, who has so often appealed to the poetic imagination of Virginians, is brought upon the scene. When the hero is bound a captive and depressed in spirit, she sings to him, "soft, and sweet, and low," the following words:—

- "Hapless stranger, cease complaining, Though thy bed be hard and cold; Hours of bliss are still remaining, Days of joy thou shalt behold. Fortune's wheel is ever turning, Think'st thou it will stop with thee? Know thou art but lessons learning Of its mutability.
- "When the beam of joy is sparkling, Remember still the wheel goes on; Prospects blooming—shadows darkling, Now beds of down, now beds of stone:



MARGARET JUNKIN PRESTON



This is but a mortal's measure, Droop not, yield not to despair; Who has drained the cup of pleasure, But must drain the cup of care?"

These stanzas, it will be recognized, contain an echo of Scott. But the body of the poem is written in the difficult Spenserian measure, which is handled with considerable skill. For example, the colonists that accompanied Smith are thus described:—

"'Twas piteous to behold this motley band,
'Twas piteous, and in truth was curious too,
Where all, as oft we read of fairy land,
Their baffled hopes, and ruined schemes renew,
And oft defeated, still the race pursue;
The state, the climate changed—unchanged the mind;
Still to their former passions they are true;
Still round their hearts the same false pleasures wind,
And they are all themselves—no folly left behind."

The theme attempted in Riego, or the Spanish Martyra regular five-act tragedy—is the Revolution in Spain in 1820, of which the most striking incidents and prominent actors are presented. The author "will not say that he has followed history, in every particular, with scrupulous exactness. But the principal scenes and traits of character—the various fortunes of the Revolutionary contest—the stormy debates in the cortes the artful villainy of Saez—the treachery of Abisbal, Ballasteros, and Morillo-the falsehood, cruelty, and pusillanimity of Ferdinand VII.—the energy and persevering constancy of Mina—the patriotic devotion and execrable assassination of the great chief of the Revolution—and the tenderness and distress of his wife-will be found sufficiently sustained by authentic narratives, or contemporary opinion." A few lines must suffice to show the strain in which the tragedy is written. Mina speaks over the murdered body of Riego:-

"Self-doomed,

Thy murderer tosses on his downy couch,
While at his blood-stained hand thy soul receives
Heaven's passport to its sunbright realms. What tho'
No sculptured stone record thy praise? When Ferdinand's
Dismantled tomb shall be a crumbling ruin,
The just, the brave, shall moisten with tearful eye
The everliving turf that marks Riego's grave."

The Opuscula, which was published in 1871, is partly prose and partly verse, and calls for no further consideration. It is evident from the foregoing review that Judge Robertson was a man of varied literary gifts and attainments.

Mrs. Littleford.—Mrs. Littleford's volume, The Wreath; or, Verses on Various Subjects, which the title page tells us was written by "a lady of Richmond," was published by subscription in 1828. In the back part of the book is a list of the subscribers, who, many of them well known in Virginia history, had too much old-time chivalry to refuse a lady the favor of buying from one to five copies of her poems. John Marshall read an early copy; and we wonder whether there was any conscious conflict between his sterling integrity and his chivalrous courtesy as he wrote of the poems: "The pensive air which characterizes them, and the strain of just and pure sentiment with which they are animated, cannot fail to inspire the wish that the author may receive the encouragement which ought to reward virtue and genius."

In the preface we read that "the writer submits, with feelings of extreme diffidence, these effusions, hastily written, in situations the most unfavorable to literary exertion, roughly stamped with the impress of the moment—thrown aside, and neither retouched nor polished." In making these statements a plea for indulgence on the part of her readers, the author,

like so many others of her day, seems unconscious of the fact that the publication of hasty, unpolished verse is both a disrespect to the public and an offence against art. It is due to both that the poet do his best.

But it should not be inferred that the writer of *The Wreath* is to be taken exactly at her word. Something must be allowed to modest self-depreciation. Her poems are neither so hasty nor so unpolished as she pretends; in fact, their commonplace thought and commonplace manner almost reach the point of excellence. Her rhymes may leave something to be desired, but still she can grasp and work out a poetic conception, as in her stanzas *On Duty*:—

"O! awful Duty, at thy shrine,

Low let thy victim bow,

Differing thy wreaths from those which bind

The happy lover's brow.

"The chaplet his of myrtle twined,
Which roses gay adorn;
The briar is sharp, but who would mind
The puncture of a thorn?

"But thine the honored civic crown,
Of lasting foliage made;
Deep scars, dark cares and woes are found
To dwell beneath its shade."

## CHAPTER IX

# Poets from 1830 to 1840

T. J. Lees.—The Musings of Carol, containing an Essay on Liberty; The Desperado, a Tale of the Ocean, and Other Original Poems was published in Wheeling in 1831. The volume is far more interesting and important than its insignificant appearance would indicate. It is the first poetical work from the extreme western part of the State. The author, as he informs us in the preface, "makes no pretensions to classical learning." He claims to be "merely a common man"; but it does not take a long examination of the work before us to discover that he has read widely and thought to some purpose. He writes, not so much for the foolish pride of rhyming, as for the expression of his thoughts on life and existing social conditions.

As already intimated in a previous chapter, before the Civil War there existed in the western part of Virginia a wide-spread feeling of dissatisfaction. Many in that part of the State were not in sympathy with what they regarded as the aristocratic tendencies east of the Alleghanies, and they felt, moreover, that they did not have a fair share in the state government, or get a due proportion of the public improvements. The Musings of Carol reflect this sentiment in an emphatic way, and utter prophecies that have since been fulfilled.

The Essay on Liberty is the most considerable poem in the book. As the author states, it "was written with a view of reviving the spirit of republican simplicity, which is evidently on the decline in this country; and through a desire of contributing something towards the improvement of that liberty for which our patriotic ancestors were willing to stake their

lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. I love my country as ardently as any man living; and while I rejoice in her prosperity, I am but too well convinced that the spirit of speculation and monopoly, the rapid progress of European pride and extravagance, the existence of slavery, a thirst for office, and the want of a system of general education, are the most effectual means that could be adopted for putting an end to American liberty. Under these impressions I feel it my duty to solicit the public attention to the subject in order that the people, while yet they retain the power, may avert their fate by the application of a timely remedy; for which reason the poem is addressed more to the understanding than to the imagination, and is written in a style less ornamental than it might otherwise have been."

It is worth while to see how he treats the themes bearing on the social conditions he perceives to exist about him. The poem is divided into two parts, of which the first is devoted to a "eulogium on the land of Columbus, considered as the Paradise of modern liberty." Part second is a practical and passionate outcry, the warning notes of which the State might have done well to heed.

In 1829 a constitutional convention met in Richmond for the purpose of framing a new and more liberal constitution. It extended the right of suffrage; but in giving a large preponderance to legislative representation from the Piedmont and Tidewater regions, it failed to meet the wishes of the delegates from the western part of the State. "They were outvoted," the author says in a note, "by the slaveholders of the East." The convention and its results are discussed in the poem:—

<sup>&</sup>quot;Of rank injustice did the poor complain, Sued for their blood-bought rights, but all in vain; The haughty lordlings sate with swollen pride, And heard our grievance, but redress denied:

From burning bosom black oppression flung Envenomed serpents, armed with human tongue; Who, in the face of heaven, contemptuously Sneered at the sacred name of liberty.

'We grant you Peasantry,' replied the knaves,
'All the high privilege of faithful slaves;
Go to your task—'tis ours to legislate,
And wield the awful destinies of state;
Yours to obey, whatever laws we deem
Most fit—for equal rights are but a dream!'"

The author was well acquainted with the natural resources of the western part of the State, observed its rapid development, and rejoiced in its grander future. Along the teeming shores,—

"Where proud Ohio rolls his beauteous flood"-

a vigorous population was increasing, and towns and cities were rapidly springing up. There—

"No more upon the night winds wildly swell
The war's rude clamor, and the battle's yell;
No more the mighty Indian wields in strife
The deadly tomahawk and scalping knife;
But gentle peace and cheerfulness pervade
The bustling city and the rural shade:
Here commerce pours the wealth of other lands;
Art sallies forth with strong and dextrous hands,
Fells the tall forest, bids each mansion rise
With taste and grandeur, destined to surprise
The eastern traveler, who vainly dreams
Of wretched wigwams, and savage screams."

On this passage, only a part of which is given, the poet has the following explanatory note: "That part of Virginia which borders on the Ohio, is rapidly improving in wealth and population; its inhabitants have long been dissatisfied with the selfish policy, and the usurpations of the Eastern slaveholders, whose

influence in the legislative body has ever been exerted in the perpetuation of an oppressive aristocracy. The people are very different from those of the eastern part of the State. Industry is much more encouraged and respected; slavery is unpopular, and the few who hold slaves generally treat them well. The time is not far distant when Western Virginia will either liberalize the present state government or separate itself entirely from the Old Dominion."

The poet laments, in passionate words, the pride of wealth and the spread of plutocratic power. What would he say to-day?—

"'Tis fortune gives the legal power to reign;
The blood of patriots has been shed in vain;
She speaks the word, and at her potent call,
Her favorites rise to fill the senate hall;
The fleet and army feel her magic powers,
The sailor doffs his hat, the soldier cowers;
The laborer bending o'er his daily toil,
Scorned by the haughty lordlings of the soil,
His humble worth and usefulness unprized,
Is, like the slave, degraded and despised."

The Musings of Carol end with a poem of fifty-five Spenserian stanzas, the purpose of which was "merely an attempt to satirize the multifarious vices, follies, whims, and inconsistencies of mankind." The poem shows the influence of Byron; but only a shrewd and independent observer of men could have written the following lines:—

"All have their foibles, and the best, 'tis sure,
Are not much better than their meanest neighbors;
Though they would tell us they are wondrous pure—
Their deeds of bigotry all pious labors;
Some stand as chosen guards, with lifted sabres,
To cleave poor sinners down at heaven's door;
Such hatred do they bear to all that's evil,
They freely give mankind as fuel to the Devil."

Our author was opposed to slavery, and has one poem on the subject equal in vigor to the most passionate utterances of Whittier. But only one more extract can be given and that is taken from a short poem called *The Wish*. It embodies our poet's ideal of a worthy and happy life:—

"But heaven grant me health, a virtuous mind;
Stern independence, not to be subdued,
And competence, the wish of all mankind,
The choice of social life or solitude,
As best may suit the gay or gloomy mood,
A spirit free, that men may never bind
With bigots' chains, that half the world enslave;
A conscience clear, a hope that shrinks not from the grave."

The author's criticism upon his book is not entirely unjust. "In the first place," he says, "it will be found rather deficient in pearls, rubies, diamonds, posies, fairies, witches, ghosts, cupids, forget-me-nots, true lover's knots, sweet kisses, melting kisses, burning kisses, etc. Secondly, there will not be any extraordinary flights of fancy, for the sad realities of life have already clipped the wings of imagination; it will not, however, be destitute of originality, which is considered a scarce article among modern poets. But the most I can say in its favor is, that the anti-fastidious reader with good spectacles, hard scratching, and more than mortal patience, may find here and there, amongst a bushel of chaff, a grain or two of common sense." Of this last, it may be added, there is a great deal more than the self-depreciating poet lays claim to.

Edgar Allan Poe.—Poe stands almost alone among the poets of Virginia. He belongs to the nation rather than to the State. To this proud position he is raised alike by his intellectual brilliancy, the number and excellence of his works, and the varied scenes of his literary labors. Whether poetry, criticism,

or fiction, he shows extraordinary power in them all—one of the few original, creative writers in the annals of American literature: But the moral element in life is the most important, and in this Poe was lacking. With him, truth was not the first necessity. He allowed his judgment to be warped by friendship, and apparently sacrificed sincerity to the vulgar desire of gaining popular applause.

It would extend this sketch too far to follow Poe throughout his tragical career.¹ Left an orphan by the death of his parents in Richmond, he was received into the home of Mr. John Allan, a wealthy merchant of the city. After receiving a preparatory training in England and in a Richmond academy, he matriculated in 1826 at the University of Virginia. Though he attended his classes with a fair degree of regularity, he seems to have fallen into habits of reckless extravagance. At the end of his first session, Mr. Allan placed Poe in his own counting-room; but the restless and wayward young man found the routine of business intolerably irksome. With high notions of his own ability, he started out to seek his fortune; but he was soon reduced to financial straits, and in his pressing need he enlisted, under an assumed name, in the United States army.

After a year or two, through the influence of Mr. Allan, young Poe secured a discharge from the army, and obtained an appointment as cadet at West Point. He entered the military academy in 1830, and, as usual, established a reputation for brilliancy and folly. He was a devourer of books, but showed a contemptuous neglect of his military duties. The final result may be easily anticipated: at the end of six months, he was summoned before a court martial, tried, and expelled.

This brings us to the beginning of his literary career. Before

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The author has devoted an entire chapter to Poe in his Poets of the South.

leaving West Point, he arranged for the publication of a volume of poetry, which appeared in New York in 1831. This volume, to which the students of the academy subscribed liberally in advance, is noteworthy in several particulars. In a prefatory letter Poe lays down the poetic principle to which he endeavored to conform his productions. It throws much light on his poetry by exhibiting the ideal at which he aimed. "A poem, in my opinion," he says, "is opposed to a work of science by having for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; to romance, by having for its object an indefinite instead of a definite pleasure, being a poem only as far as this object is attained; romance presenting perceptible images, poetry with indefinite sensations, to which end music is an essential, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music without the idea is simply music; the idea without the music is prose from its very definiteness." Musical verse embowered in a golden mist of thought and sentiment—this is Poe's poetical ideal.

As illustrative of his musical rhythm, the following lines from Al Aaraaf may be given:—

"Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one!
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,
O! is it thy will
On the breezes to toss?
Or, capriciously still,
Like the lone Albatross,
Incumbent on night
(As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
On the harmony there?"

After a year or more of hack work in Baltimore, where he won a hundred dollar prize with his tale A Ms. Found in a

Bottle, Poe obtained employment on the Southern Literary Messenger, and removed to Richmond in 1835. Here he made a brilliant start; life seemed to open before him full of promise. In a short time he was promoted to the editorship of the Messenger, and by his tales, poems, and especially his reviews, he made that magazine very popular. In a twelve-month he increased its subscription list fron seven hundred to nearly five thousand, and made the magazine a rival of the Knickerbocker and the New Englander. He was loudly praised by the Southern press, and was generally regarded as one of the foremost writers of the day.

In the Messenger Poe began his work as a critic. His criticism was of the slashing kind, and he soon became little short of a terror. With a great deal of critical acumen and a fine artistic sense, he made relentless war on pretentious mediocrity, and rendered good service to American letters by enforcing higher literary standards. He was lavish in his charges of plagiarism; and he made use of cheap, second-hand learning in order to ridicule the pretended scholarship of others. He often affected an irritating and contemptuous superiority. But with all his humbug and superciliousness, his critical estimates, in the main, have been sustained.

After eighteen months in Richmond, during which he established a brilliant literary reputation, Poe was again turned adrift. He went North, and became editor first of the Gentleman's Magazine, and afterwards of Graham's Magazine. At no other period of his life did his genius appear to better advantage. Thrilling stories and trenchant criticisms followed one another in rapid succession. Among the prose masterpieces of this period may be mentioned The Fall of the House of Usher, Ligeia, which he regarded as his best tale, The Descent into the Maelstrom, The Murders in the Rue Morgue, and The Mystery of Marie Roget. The general character of his

tales may be inferred from their titles. Poe delighted in the weird, fantastic, dismal, horrible. There is no warmth of human sympathy, no moral consciousness, no lessons of practical wisdom. His tales are the product of a morbid but powerful imagination. His style is in perfect keeping with his peculiar gifts. He had a highly developed artistic sense. By his air of perfect candor, his minuteness of detail, and his power of graphic description, he gains complete mastery over the soul, and leads us to believe the impossible. Within the limited range of his imagination (for he was by no means the universal genius he fancied himself to be), he is unsurpassed, perhaps, by any other American writer.

In 1845 Poe published a tolerably complete edition of his poems in the revised form in which they now appear in his works. The volume contained nearly all the poems upon which his poetic fame justly rests. Among those that may be regarded as embodying his highest poetic achievement are The Raven, Lenore, Ulalume, The Bells, Annabel Lee, The Haunted Palace, The Conqueror Worm, The City in the Sea, Eulalie, and Israfel. Rarely has so large a fame rested on so small a number of poems, and rested so securely. His range of themes, it will be noticed, is very narrow. As in his tales, he dwells in a weird, fantastic, or desolate region—usually under the shadow of death. He conjures up unearthly landscapes as a setting for his gloomy and morbid fancies. In The City in the Sea, for example,—

"There shrines, and palaces, and towers (Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie."

In his poems, as in his tales, Poe was less anxious to set forth an experience or a truth than to make an impression. His poetry aims at beauty in a purely artistic sense, unassociated with truth or morals. It is, for the most part, singularly vague, unsubstantial, and melodious. Some of his poems—and precisely those in which his genius finds its highest expression—defy complete analysis. Ulalume, for instance, remains obscure after the twentieth perusal—its meaning lost in a haze of mist and music. Yet these poems, when read in a sympathetic mood, never fail of their effect. They are genuine creations; and, as a fitting expression of certain mental states, they possess an indescribable charm, something like the spell of the finest instrumental music. There is no mistaking Poe's poetic genius. Though not the greatest, he is still the most original of our American poets, and has fairly earned the high esteem in which his gifts are held at home and abroad.

By way of illustration we give the brief, exquisite poem entitled *To Helen*. It was inspired, as the poet tells us, by the memory of "the one idolatrous and purely ideal love" of his restless youth:—

"Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

"On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.

"Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!"

Frederick Speece.—Frederick Speece was a native of Campbell County, Va. His unpretentious volume, My Native Land, and Other Poems, published in 1832, is a work of commendable excellence. The author formed his art on the best poetry of the eighteenth century. Goldsmith and Cowper seem to have been his models; yet it is rare that there is servile imitation. Mr. Speece had eyes to observe, and force enough to describe what he saw. His volume is altogether a credit to Virginia letters, and deserved a wider circulation than it in all probability had. There seem to be very few copies in existence.

In the first volume of the Southern Literary Messenger we find a review of the volume in question. "We do not hesitate," says the editor "to recommend this work as incomparably superior to much of that glittering trash which passes under the name of poetry. There is a vein of good sense, of just and honest feeling, of tender melancholy, and sometimes of rich imagination, which runs through this volume, and which cannot fail to delight such readers as have any soul for poetical composition. His versification for the most part is sweet and melodious."

Dates are affixed to most of the poems, which were written between the years 1810 and 1831. There are a few lyrical poems of no great excellence, but the greater part of the book is made up of satirical and didactic verse. The title piece, My Native Land, is an autobiographic and descriptive account of Campbell County, which, upon the return of the author after a long absence, awakens many fond memories. He seems to have had in youth the sensitiveness and eccentricity sometimes belonging to a poetic temperament:—

<sup>&</sup>quot;A fretful infant, and a wayward boy, In me my friends found much for grief and joy; Grief, not for crimes or stubbornness of soul, But whims and fancies they could not control;

A thoughtful, melancholy turn of mind, To mirth, and light amusement disinclined. They blamed me much for being dull and shy, And when I laughed or wept, they scarce knew why."

He was a bookish lad, and fond of nature. Hence, when country parties convened for frolic, he says,—

"Some favorite volume, or capricious mood
Detained me in the shades of solitude,
Far from the merry group and mazy dance,
To watch the genial season's coy advance,
Where whispering zephyrs wafted rich perfume,
And breathed the timid roses into bloom."

The Peaks of Otter, which have several times found place in Virginia poetry, were visible from our author's home, and in their sunset glory made a deep impression on his youthful mind. The following extract will show his power in elevated and graphic description:—

"In softened radiance to the blushing west
The sun descending sought his wonted rest,
And drew in pomp around his flaming bed
His cloudy curtains, tinged with rosy red,
And I, forgetful of approaching night,
Watched the long lingering beams of parting light,
Where the twin Peaks like hoary giants rise
In frowning grandeur midway to the skies.
While twilight deepened on the plains below,
Their towering heights detained the yellow glow,
Till slowly fading from my distant view,
Their rocky summits slept in pensive blue."

Juvenalis Redivivus, which was written in 1814, is a severe stricture, in the style of the Roman poet, upon contemporary morals and manners. In his preface, which is dated October, 1829, the author says: "The strictures on manners exhibited

in the satires, are not so pointedly applicable now as they were a dozen years ago. They are preserved as being not too highly colored pictures of what once was, while the writer of them cheerfully acknowledges that, since the period of their composition, a great and, he would hope, a permanent change of manners has taken place."

The general scope of the satires may be seen from the following lines:—

"Would I had fallen on some happier time,
When helpless poverty was not a crime!
When virtue and religion gave a tone,
And sense and taste thro' manly manners shone;
When men to different grades of honor grew
By true desert—the only way they knew;
And nought but real worth and merit gave
Charms to the wise, and splendor to the brave."

We are accustomed to think of the present as a time of material interests. The pulpit cries out against the worship of Mammon. But if we may trust the statements of our satirist, the present age compares very favorably in morals with a century ago. After a comprehensive survey of men, and of the objects of their pursuit, the poet concludes that—

"Wealth is their God; on his polluted shrine
They offer all things human and divine.
Wealth prompts their labors, whether foul or fair,
In courts and camps, the senate and the bar.
The object well-defined and understood,
For hoarded cash is now the greatest good.
Virtue is praised and starves; the liberal fare
Would make her plump, could she but live on air;
While all the passions, listed on the side
Of sneaking avarice, minister to pride,
Hold torpid conscience under strong control,
And give a fatal bias to the soul."

The satirist was friendly neither to slavery nor tobacco, and lamented the utilitarian spirit which was displacing true learning and culture:—

"For knowledge truly every bosom pants,
At least to understand tobacco plants!
The mode of tilth adapted to the soil,
And wring from negroes their last mite of toil!
These are the arts that claim attention now,
To these must genius, learning, science, bow:
While the delicious sweets of classic lore
Are left untasted, and attract no more."

The *Evening Walk* is likewise a satire, but less passionate in its tone. A meditative and philosophic sadness tempers its reflections upon the follies and ills of life. Blank verse takes the place of rhymed couplets. At the pensive twilight hour, the poet strays alone and worships at the shrine of beauty:—

"Dear Poesy, enraptured of thy charms,
O may I ever wake to love and thee,
From the low dull pursuits of common life!
Through all revolving seasons let me feel
Thy cheering ray benign, and every sun
Light us to converse sweet, whether his beams
Play on the crimson curtain of the west
Or gild the mountains with the blaze of morn;
Light up a gem in every damask bud,
Or sparkling glance along the drifted snow."

Advancing years brought our poet disappointment and sorrow. The death of a beloved son, a youth of sixteen, came as a crushing blow. In *A pology* we read:—

"My harp that once in rapture rung,
Full-toned to joy and gladness,
Lies all unheeded and unstrung
Beneath the cloud of sadness;
Vain were the task, the effort vain,
To wake its thrilling notes again."

The volume before us closes in a funereal tone; it seems to reflect a life which, in spite of intellectual gifts of a high order, ended in disappointed hopes and habitual sadness.

Thomas J. Semmes.—The author of *Poems by A Collegian* is Thomas J. Semmes. The verse in this volume, which was originally published in various periodicals, rises above the level of undergraduate productions. The author, however, was not misled, as sometimes happens, by an undue estimate of the merit of the poems, and published them as a memorial of himself for his friends.

To My Country is an elevated ode, which begins as follows:—

"To thee, who standest as a child in age
Amid the nations now,
Yet round whose monarch brow
Is bound the wreath of never-dying glory—
Thee, who hadst freedom for thy heritage,
Yet boastest no deeds in laureled minstrel's story;
In whose pure realm and simple clime
The pomp of courts, and pride, and kingly grace
Ne'er found a dwelling-place,
To thee I tune my lay, thou proudest work of Time."

The poet felt the solemnizing influence of approaching night, when the heart turns with chastened feelings toward the great Source of life:—

"Evening—'tis then the o'erfraught heart doth pour Its wealth of pious incense at the shrine Of Deity—the spirit then may soar Into those regions where the angels twine Wreaths for the glorious of our earthly race;—'Tis then that we can see, and feel, and trace His glory in the realms of starry space."

The poem of David is written in the style of N. P. Willis:-

"King David knelt. Rich perfumes played round, Rising luxuriantly up from flowers, That droopingly bent down their heads, as grieved To part from their rich spirit of existence."

There are passages in which poetic sentiment is happily wedded to melodious expression. The following stanza embodies a very pleasing fancy:—

"And when the stars were breathing out
Their holy light to earth,
And diamonding the glad blue sky
For the young moon's queenly birth,
I've gazed upon some lovely one,
And thought that it might be
A glorious home in the afterworld,
In which to live with thee."

The author had a keen appreciation of the beauties of nature, and the glorious night-time especially seemed to stir poetic emotion. Take the following as an example:—

"The air is like a tideless sea
Of pure and silvery light,
And the waters glance transparently,
Illumed by the queen of night.

"The crested waves as they dash on high,
And dissolve in pearly beads,
Appear as a carpet spread gaudily,
Where the giant sea-god treads."

The volume, apart from the meritorious character of the poetry, is notable as the first poetical fruitage of the University of Virginia. It has had unfortunately but few successors. The

University has produced orators, statesmen, and scholars; but unlike Harvard, it has not greatly fostered poetic genius.

Robert F. Astrop.—As we learn from the title page, Robert Francis Astrop was from Brunswick, Va. His Original Poems on a Variety of Subjects, Interspersed with Tales, was published in Philadelphia in 1835; and though it contains only 132 pages, it claims to be "the largest miscellaneous collection ever published by an American author." With the range of subjects in this volume there is no fault to be found; it is sufficiently comprehensive and varied. But the author is unfortunately one of those writers—too numerous in the early annals of American literature—who do not perceive that there is any distinction between verse and poetry. Thus, when our author versifies Logan's famous speech or Washington's address to Congress in 1789, he evidently thinks that he has written poetry; the fact is, he has only spoiled good prose. A single extract will suffice:—

"To any white man I appeal to say
If Logan's hut he ever entered dry,
Or hungry, cold, and naked, came that way,
And he his wants rejected to supply."

Astrop did not publish his book, as he tells us, under the patronage of great names. "For notice and encouragement, he depends alone on that degree of genius and worth which a liberal and impartial public may deem him possessed of. He writes more for pleasure than necessity—more through a natural inclination than a thirst for fame, and desires, above everything, to please and amuse. His heart, like that of every other man, is sometimes gay and sometimes sad, and so are his writings." The author was patriotic in sentiment; his heart in its benevolence turned to the wretched and the idle; the former he wished to soothe, and the latter to employ with his writings. Perhaps he was not entirely disappointed in this benevolent and

praiseworthy purpose; for trifles, as all the world knows, often have attractions for the human heart.

Samuel M. Janney.—Mr. Janney was not only a poet, but also a man of affairs and a leader among the Quakers of Virginia. He might well be known as the Quaker poet of the Old Dominion. He was, according to the testimony of those who knew him, "an able minister of the gospel, sound in doctrine, endowed with wisdom and a ready utterance, and favored with openings into the mysteries of God's kingdom."

He began early to write verse, and in 1824 his brief poem The Country School House was awarded the prize offered by the New York Mirror for the best poetic composition. This success led to a correspondence with the editor George P. Morris, and subsequently to a personal acquaintance. The poem in question, written in the measure and spirit of Gray's Elegy, is a remarkable poem for a young man. It shows not only native talent but also considerable mastery of literary form. It contains stanzas that would not be discordant in Gray's immortal poem. Take this, for example:—

"Not all the praise on history's page enrolled
Can stay the course of man's expiring breath,
Nor fame's loud trump, nor ramparts formed of gold,
Control the ravage of the victor Death."

Our author, a native of Loudoun County, Va., was married in 1826. On his wedding trip he visited Niagara Falls and some of the Northern lakes. At Lake George he wrote a poem that displays at once his keen admiration of natural beauty and his excellent powers of vivid description:—

"Oh! I have watched with rapture-lighted eye
The earliest dawn that tinged you orient sky,—
Seen the blue mists around these mountains rolled,
Their graceful outlines tinged with burnished gold,

Till from yon cliffs that o'er the water frown,
The sun uprisen poured his radiance down;
Chased by his light, the sombre shades withdrew,
The scattered clouds in wild confusion flew,
Clear and distinct each beauteous scene became,
And all the mountain tops were fringed with flame."

Several years later he spent some weeks at the Red Sulphur Springs in Monroe County for his health. He lived in a log cabin by himself; and in his loneliness he sometimes found entertainment in writing verse. It was there that A Night Scene Among the Mountains of Virginia was written, a poem which he pronounced among the best of his compositions at that time. Its opening stanzas are as follows:—

"How calm and glorious is the hour of night
In these uncultured, solitary wilds,
When o'er each lowly vale and lofty height
The full-orbed moon in cloudless lustre smiles.

"Those lofty mountains with their forests green,
And craggy summits towering to the sky,
How proudly do they rise o'er all the scene,
And lift the mind from earth to muse on high.

"And yon pure rivulet that pours along,
Playing and sparkling in the moonbeams clear,
How sweet the music of its vesper song,
In changeful cadence, falls upon the ear.

"And hark! the roar of those far-spreading woods, Sinking or rising as the wind sweeps by; Myriads of voices fill these solitudes, And send the notes of melody on high."

In 1839 he published The Last of the Lenapé and Other Poems, including those already mentioned. "I was encouraged by my friends to believe," he says, "that they had sufficient

literary merit to win popular favor, and the edition of one thousand copies was disposed of readily, but there seemed to be no demand for another edition. Some years later I wrote and published a few other poems, but gradually my taste for poetry declined, and I came to the conclusion that I should succeed better in prose, which proved to be the case." This quotation is from his *Memoirs*, an interesting autobiography to which we are indebted for other facts embodied in this sketch.

The Last of the Lenapé is introduced by an Essay on Poetry, which is as applicable to conditions to-day as to those of seventy years ago. "In this utilitarian age," writes the author, "the wonderful discoveries of science, the progress of civil liberty, and the rapid march of improvement in the mechanic arts, in manufactures, and in navigation, have turned the attention of the public almost entirely to those pursuits which minister to the physical wants of man. It is not the design of this essay to discourage those pursuits, but merely to show that there are others which relate more immediately to the wants of the mind, and which have an equal, if not a still greater tendency to extend the sphere of human enjoyment. The happiness of man does not depend so much upon the extent of his temporal possessions, as upon the purity of his desires, and the harmonious action of his moral and intellectual powers."

In the *Dedication* the poet expresses the purpose of his lays and his conception of the poetic art:—

"'Tis not an idle song I here present,
The wildering fires of passion to impart,
But framed with higher views,—and with intent
To wake the finer feelings of the heart:
For 'tis the province of the minstrel's art,
(A noble art when worthily pursued,)
To soothe the anguish left by sorrow's dart,
To cheer the lonely hours of solitude,
And fill the soul with love for all that's great and good."

The title poem, the incidents of which are supposed to have occurred in the neighborhood of Philadelphia about 1683, is a tradition of Indian kindness and its subsequent reward by English colonists. The friendly tribe of the Lenapé had melted away till only one was left.

"That one—sad relic of a tribe

Now passed from earth away—

They brought to their own home, and there
They cherished her with pious care,
Till life's last closing day."

Tewinissa is another Indian legend told in simple ballad form. Several of the pieces—Potomac, Jefferson's Rock at Harper's Ferry, The Peaks of Otter,—describe picturesque and beautiful features of the author's native state. There are a few devotional lyrics which in their religious fervor and artistic form would grace any hymn-book. In short, it is evident that Mr. Janney possessed poetic gifts of no mean order; and had he continued to cultivate the muse, he would have further enriched our store of poetry.

The later years of his life were spent in the service of religion and of his country. He rose to prominence among the Society of Friends. He was active in his opposition to slavery—an opposition that once brought him before the Loudoun court. He entered a canvass for free schools in Virginia; and after the Civil War he was made superintendent of Indian Affairs—an office he filled with great fidelity and efficiency. The life of this large-minded and upright poet, minister, citizen, and public servant came to a lamented end April 30, 1880.

John K. Mitchell.—John Keardsly Mitchell was born at Shepherdstown, Va. His family was from Scotland; and after the death of his father, he was sent to Ayr and Edinburgh to be

educated. He returned to this country, studied medicine in Philadelphia, and in 1841 was made a professor in Jefferson Medical College. In addition to his lectures on the Practice of Medicine, he was a contributor to the American Medical Journal.

In 1839 he published *Indecision*, a Tale of the Far West, and other Poems. It is dedicated to N. Chapman, M. D., a former medical instructor, in a few excellent verses that recall his education in Scotland:—

"Dear Doctor, though I hae the will,
I fear I want poetic skill
To do ye muckle credit;
But yet I'll imp my youthfu' wing,
And o' my quid preceptor sing,
Though ye y'ersel may dread it."

The title poem of the volume is a sad romance covering a hundred pages. It is written in rhymed iambic pentameter; and through the tragic life of the hero it teaches the moral, as expressed in the concluding lines—

"That indecision marks its path with tears;
That want of candor darkens future years;
That perfect truth is virtue's safest friend;
And that to shun the wrong is better than to mend."

Though the story is painfully sad, it is illumined with many admirable descriptive passages. Take, for example, this description of morning at sea:—

"A beaming point just tips the doubtful verge,
Where sea and sky their dubious colors merge,
And up, at one bright leap, in glory springs
The sun, and o'er the ocean spreads his wings.
Along the rippling waters, golden light
A trembling causeway payes, so pure, so bright

A path to Heaven, it seems to fancy's eye Continued upward thro' the yellow sky In clouds like clustered gems of every hue, To pale the ruby's blush and shame the sapphire's blue."

In the Southern Literary Messenger for May, 1839, there is an elaborate review of Dr. Mitchell's volume of poems. Indecision is declared to illustrate "the spirit of true poetry." The editor says, "Dr. Mitchell is a poet. Its spirit has thrilled in his heart, and its breathings are visible in the words to which he gives utterance. He never could have written, in the first instance, merely to see his name and his productions in print. The lively principle stirred within him, and he obeyed its promptings—the burning thoughts 'came crowding thickly up for utterance,' and he spoke."

Among the minor poems of the volume is one entitled *The New and the Old Song*, the sentiment and lilt of which go to the heart. It here follows in full:—

"A new song should be sweetly sung,
It goes but to the ear;
A new song should be sweetly sung,
For it touches no one near:
But an old song may be roughly sung;
The ear forgets its art,
As comes upon the rudest tongue
The tribute of the heart.

"A new song should be sweetly sung,
For memory gilds it not;
It brings not back the strains that rung
Through childhood's sunny cot.
But an old song may be roughly sung,
It tells of days of glee,
When the boy to his mother clung,
Or danced on his father's knee.

"On tented fields 'tis welcome still;

'Tis sweet on the stormy sea,
In forest wild, on rocky hill,
And away on the prairie-lea:—
But dearer far the old song,
When friends we love are nigh,
And well-known voices, clear and strong,
Unite in the chorus-cry

"Of the old song, the old song,
The song of the days of glee,
When the boy to his mother clung,
Or danced on his father's knee!
Oh, the old song—the old song!
The song of the days of glee;
The new song may be better sung,
But the good old song for me!"

The latter part of the volume under review is made up of Sacred Poetry, in which the author gathers some "sweet flowers by the banks of the river of life." In the following brief poem he expresses his views on Infidelity:—

"The fiend that comes with stealthy pace
To filch our hopes away,
To snatch from human misery
Its comfort and its stay:

"That strikes away the last fond hope On which the spirit leans, The only gem the dying heart From earthly brilliants gleans."

## CHAPTER X

## Poets from 1840 to 1850

Mrs. Webster.—Mrs. M. M. Webster lived in Richmond. 1840 she published a volume of 220 pages entitled Pocahontas. There was a peculiar fitness in the authorship of this poem; for Mrs. Webster was a direct descendant, at the seventh remove, of the famous heroine she celebrates. No doubt she felt a pardonable pride in her kinship with one who to royalty of birth added the higher excellence of nobility of character.

She needs no justification in her choice of a theme; but what she has said about the American Indians is so well expressed. that it is worth quoting as an apology for all similar subjects. "Few subjects," she says, "belong more peculiarly to the province of poetry than events connected with the Aborigines of our country. They were altogether a poetic race. Their deeds of heroic daring, their uncomplaining endurance of physical suffering, affecting instances of patriotic devotion, scenes of domestic leveliness and personal, unbroken friendships,—these, besides the varied and romantic scenery of their boundless domains, are fitting themes for the investments of the poet's fancy, no less than for the records of the faithful historian."

The poem, which is divided into five books, follows in the main the annals of history. The author, however, has not been content with a mere versified form of history; but, with true poetic insight and fancy, she has enriched the narrative, and raised it above the realm of prose. There are faint hints and traditions handed down from colonial days which she has skillfully employed. "These traditionary incidents," she says, "it has been the author's endeavor to weave into wild and simple measures, divested of much of the extraneous ornament which

fashion sometimes imposes. Our heroine is presented to the reader in every stage of her being, from fancy's dawn to maturer years, through scenes as varied and as thrilling as the wildest fancy might sketch. A prodigy of goodness, she is found dispensing blessings around her, even at the hazard of parental displeasure; and, at a tender age, offering the tribute of sympathy where effort would be unavailing."

The verse consists of varied lyrical forms that gracefully yield to the changing sentiment. A single extract must suffice by way of illustration. The fair Matoa, later known as Pocahontas, found, on returning from exile, a captive stranger at her father's court:—

- "Before the monarch's presence stood A graceful form with radiant eye; With power unfelt, but purpose good, To cloud his star's dark destiny.
  - "Held by the thews of forest deer,
    Alone this mystic being stands.
    Oh! was it reverence, love, or fear,
    That bade Matoa burst his bands?
  - "And when condemned by ruthless hate,
    His life-blood doomed to flow around,
    Her courage stayed the victim's fate,
    And bared her bosom to the wound.
- "And even when the ready knife
  Seemed thirsting for the pale man's blood,
  Threatening wild vengeance on a life
  Devoted to the public good,—
- "The watchful, kind Matoa came,
  Like winged seraph from afar,
  Sweet Mercy's errands to proclaim,
  And heal the feuds of savage war."

Robert Tyler.—Robert Tyler, the son of John Tyler who afterwards became president of the United States, was born in New Kent County, Va. He graduated in law at William and Mary College in 1837. He then took up his residence at Bristol, Pa., where he won distinction at the bar. During his father's administration, he was connected with the Patent Office. Subsequently he resided in Philadelphia and took an active part in the politics of the city and the State.

Owing to his strong Southern sympathies, he found it advisable to leave Pennsylvania in 1861; and returning to his native State, he became register of the treasury of the Southern Confederacy—a position which he held throughout the Civil War. Afterwards he settled in Montgomery, Ala., where he edited the Mail and Advertiser, and continued his active interest in the political questions of the day. He was regarded as an eloquent speaker, and esteemed as a man of "commanding talents and excellent heart."

In 1842 he published a poem Ahasuerus, which is based on the legend of the Wandering Jew. In the preface the author expresses the hope that "the inexperience of a first effort will excuse many of its numerous imperfections. It is certainly in a state of mind vacillating between hope and fear that the author has determined, at the solicitation of some friends, to publish a poem that he flatters himself may not prove to be entirely unworthy of perusal by his countrymen. If it be condemned, he has at least the consolation to know that it is not the first foolish book which has been issued from the press."

No doubt our author was easily persuaded by his friends, and not without reason. The blank verse of the poem displays vigor of thought and vividness of description. Here is a picture of the Jew in sacerdotal robes, as with dark curses upon his life he insults the patient sufferer upon the cross:—

"Revenge lay like a serpent on his lip,
And hate was writhing on his cruel brow;
On his forehead bold a frown lay coiled,
Dark as the malice of his cruel heart.
Smiling in scorn, he raised on high his hand,
And smote the fainting Saviour's ashy cheek,
Then spat upon him with a fiendish ire.
A flush of agony passed o'er Christ's face,
And they who nearest stood heard these low words:

'Ahasuerus, tarry till I come.'"

Here is a picture of the ocean when at the end of all things Death brooded over the world. If it contains a suggestion of Byron, it has, at the same time, a freedom and power of its own:—

"Crestless and surgeless the untraveled seas,
No longer moved by tide or lifting breeze,
Slept dark and stagnant on their unwashed sands.
The thick and inky element stood still,
No more to sing in triumph to the gale,
No more to bear swift o'er its briny foam
The white-winged bird, the eagle of the sea;
In the wide basin of the unfathomed deep
Waveless and black the bitter waters rest."

Ahasuerus, amid the darkness and ruin, breathes a prayer of burning penitence, and "sleeps at last":—

"Upward on wings of penitence, his soul Hath sought the pure realms of eternal rest; And with the bow of glory set on high, With flashing seas and smiling azure skies, With purple mists and golden-bannered clouds, Millennium comes, and Earth, harmonious all, Rolls slowly through her silver-beaming sphere, And swells the music of the choral stars."

St. Leger Landon Carter.—For several years Mr. Carter was a frequent and favorite contributor to the Southern Literary Messenger. In 1844 he published his contributions in book form with the not unfitting title of Nugae by Nugator. Both in prose and verse he indulged a light, playful vein. He was not weighted with a ponderous philosophy, but gayly enjoyed beauty and humor wherever he found it. He sometimes fell into satire, but it was never earnest enough to inflict a wound.

As a poet Carter was lacking in what Matthew Arnold has called "high seriousness." He delighted in parody, and was fond of appropriating lines and phrases from other poets, making honest use of quotation marks. His genius was nimble and versatile, and he did not make the mistake of taking himself or the world too seriously. His range of effort may be judged from representative themes—March Court, The Wagoner, The Sale, To Dyspepsia, The Mocking Bird, The Old Church.

In those days, as in more recent years, there were people who were disloyal enough to intimate that the Old Dominion was too conservative—

"That all her days were spent, forsooth,
In one eternal chime
About her deeds of early youth—
'Resolves' of former time."

With playful irony our author controverts this view, and declares himself ready to shed the last drop—of ink, in her defense. The advocates of a disquieting progress he stigmatizes as fanatics:—

"In short, all zealots are run mad To abuse this pleasing sod, Where people sleep as sound, egad, As in the land of Nod."

Darkness is a serious poem with some strong lines, but

it suffers by an inevitable comparison with Shelley's masterful Cloud. The first stanzas are quoted:—

"Away with thee, Light! thou 'effluence bright!'
Make room for my ebon car;
When it wheels on its track with hangings of black,
I curtain the moon and the star.
I love to go forth with the storms of the North,
To follow the hurricane's sweep,
When the ships mounting high ride up to the sky,
Then down to the fathomless deep.

"The lightning, it gleams, but I swallow its beams—
My kingdom it cannot control;
The fire-rent cloud I enwrap in my shroud,
And terror I strike to the soul;
I darken my scowl with the wind's loud howl,
When God to the shipwrecked speaks,
And his thunderings drown, as the ship goes down,
Their wild and unearthly shrieks."

Perhaps none of our author's poems has been admired more than *The Sleet*, which, though drawn out too long, contains some graphic word-painting. Take, for example, these stanzas:—

"The beech-tree stands in rich array of long and shining threads, Its brittle boughs all bending low to earth their drooping heads; And now and then some broken limb comes crashing from on high, And showering down a world of gems that sparkle as they fly.

"The lofty oak—the hundred limbed Briareus of the trees. Spreads out his ponderous icy arms, loud cracking in the breeze, And as the roused up lion 'shakes the dewdrops from his mane,' So does the woodland monarch shake his crystals o'er the plain."

But after all, it must be confessed that there is a good deal of shrewd self-knowledge in our author's address *To Poetry*, which follows in full:—

P. of Va.-8

"O Poetry! thou nymph divine!
Invoked so oft in vain!
How ardently I've wished thee mine—
I've writ thee many a foolish line,
But still thou let'st me inly pine,
And die at thy disdain.

"I've wooed thee in sequestered vale,
On side of sunny hill;
I've sought thee in the moonlight pale,
When summer's sweets perfumed the gale—
The soft pursuit did not avail,
For thou wert cruel still.

"I've sighed for thee at midnight dark,
In silence deep—profound,
I've thought I heard thee coming—hark!
I said, her form I dimly mark,
She now will bring Promethean spark—
"Twas but a cheating sound.

"I've strolled along the sounding shore,
Thou lov'st the path sublime;
I've climbed the cliffs where eagles soar,
And heard the torrent's deafening roar,
But found thee not, nor would, I'm sure,
Until the end of time."

Philip Pendleton Cooke.—Too often the light of genius is extinguished by the tomb. The promise given by early achievements is destined never to be realized; and we deplore a loss without ever fully understanding its nature or extent. This truth finds exemplification in the literary annals of every country; and the life of Philip Pendleton Cooke affords us another illustration. Before his gifts had reached their full maturity and before he could carry out a moiety of the literary schemes of his fertile mind, he was suddenly taken away.

Philip Pendleton Cooke, an elder brother of John Esten,

was born in Martinsburg, Va., October 16, 1816. He was educated at Princeton, where his fondness for literature, particularly for poetry, detracted, as in so many other cases, from his proficiency in the studies of the curriculum. He studied law under his father at Winchester, but he never gave to his profession a whole-hearted service.

He had two well developed passions—hobbies, one might almost call them: the first was hunting, the other, poetry. There was no heartier sportsman in the Shenandoah Valley. He was singing from the heart in the following lines:—

"What passionate
And wild delight is in the proud swift chase!
Go out what time the lark, at heaven's red gate,
Soars joyously singing—quite infuriate
With the high pride of his place;
What time the unrisen sun arrays the morning
In its first bright adorning.

"Urge your swift horse
After the crying hounds in this fresh hour,
Vanquish high hills—stem perilous streams perforce—
Where the glades ope, give free wings to your course—
And you will know the power
Of the brave chase—and how of griefs the sorest,
A cure is in the forest!"

But it was not merely the excitements of the chase that wooed him, but a deep love of nature—a spirit sensitive to all the mystical charm of wood and field. So he wrote,—

"I love the woods
In this best season of the liberal year;
I love to haunt their whispering solitudes,
And give myself to melancholy moods,
With no intruder near;
And find strange lessons, as I sit and ponder,
On every natural wonder."

In poetry he loved the old masters Chaucer and Spenser. While still an undergraduate, at the age of seventeen, he wrote verse for the Knickerbocker Magazine, in which his Song of the Sioux Lover first appeared. He was a favorite contributor to the Southern Literary Messenger both in verse and prose, till the time of his death. In his poetic composition he felt the rapture of a genuine creative artist. "I love," he says in one of his letters, "the fever-fits of composition. The music of rhythm, coming from God knows where, like the airy melody in the Tempest, tingles pleasantly in my veins and fingers; I like to build the verse cautiously, but with the excitement of a rapid writer, which I rein in and check; and then, we both know how glorious it is to make the gallant dash, and round off the stanza with the sonorous couplet, or with some rhyme as natural to its place as a leaf on a tree, but separated from its mate that peeps down to it over the inky ends of many intervening lines."

His hunting associates hardly formed a congenial atmosphere for the development of his literary gifts. As a rule, they were far more prosaic in temperament, and entertained an ill-disguised contempt for his poetic pursuits. "What do you think of a friend of mine," he once humorously wrote, "a most valuable and worthy and hard-riding one, saying gravely to me a short time ago, 'I wouldn't waste time on a d——d thing like poetry; you might make yourself, with all your sense and judgment, a useful man in settling neighborhood disputes and differences.'" Though he could smile at such prosaic limitation, he was unable to escape entirely its chilling effects.

His Froissart Ballads and Other Poems, which was published in Philadelphia in 1847, was well received. Many of the pieces had previously appeared in the Southern Literary Messenger. The origin of the ballad portion of the volume, as explained in the preface, is found in the lines of an old Roman poet:—

"A certain freak has got into my head,
Which I can't conquer for the life of me,
Of taking up some history little read,
Or known, and writing it in poetry."

There are five ballads, two of which, The Master of Bolton and Geoffrey Tetenoir, are original inventions. The remaining three are from old Froissart, "and as faithful to the text," says the author, "as the necessities of verse permitted me to make them." The Master of Bolton, the longest of the ballads, is written in easy, flowing octosyllabic verse, after the manner of Scott's Lady of the Lake. The rest follow old ballad measures, and all glide "onward with the musical flow of the Opequon, on whose banks the poet so frequently paused to gaze at the enchanting landscape." A few lines from The Master of Bolton will serve for illustration:—

"Attended by her happy hours,
The maiden May walks garlanded;
The earth is beautiful with flowers,
And birds are jocund overhead.
Wide valleys, verdant from the showers,
By fertile cares of April shed,
Give promise to the hungry towers
Of summer fruits and autumn bread."

Two of our author's poems—Florence Vane and Rosalie Lee—have been more popular than all the rest. They were originally published in the Southern Literary Messenger, and met, as he tells us, "with more favor than I could ever perceive their just claim to." This popularity kept him from "venturing upon the correction of some faults" which he found in them. Rosalie Lee seems juvenile and defective, particularly in its rhymes; but Florence Vane, apart from its superior artistic quality, breathes a sincerity and pathos that make it one of the sweetest lyrical productions of Virginia. It is given entire:—

"I loved thee long and dearly,
Florence Vane;
My life's bright dream, and early,
Hath come again;
I renew, in my fond vision,
My heart's dear pain,
My hope, and thy derision,
Florence Vane.

"The ruin lone and hoary,
The ruin old,
Where thou did'st hark my story,
At even told,—
That spot—the hues Elysian
Of sky and plain—
I treasure in my vision,
Florence Vane.

"Thou wast lovelier than the roses
In their prime;
Thy voice excelled the closes
Of sweetest rhyme;
Thy heart was as a river
Without a main.
Would I had loved thee never,
Florence Vane.

"But fairest, coldest wonder!
Thy glorious clay
Lieth the green sod under—
Alas the day!
And it boots not to remember
Thy disdain—
To quicken love's pale ember,
Florence Vane.

"The lilies of the valley
By young graves weep;
The daisies love to dally
Where maidens sleep;

May their bloom, in beauty vying, Never wane, Where thine earthly part is lying, Florence Vane."

Of our author's other poems and of his stories there is not room to speak. He died at his home near Winchester, January 20, 1850, lamented, not only by his neighbors and comrades, but also by the much larger circle of friends that his writings had made for him.

C. M. Farmer.—Mr. Farmer is the author of The Fairy of the Stream, and Other Poems, which was published in Richmond in 1847. He was a lawyer of Charlotte County. His book contains the old-fashioned preface, from which we learn that the poems were not originally intended for publication; that they were written merely "with the view of beguiling the author's leisure hours." But patriotic motives later caused him to change his mind. "Reflecting that from some of the most beautiful and poetic spots of Virginia no song but that of nature's own minstrels, who sing not to 'numbers and harp,' has ever come, notwithstanding the many of her sons and daughters whose pens could do her classic tribute, he has determined, despite the herd of soi-disant critics, to lay his humble verse before the world in the shape of a book."

The author, who had real poetic talents, made the mistake of imitation. He was thoroughly saturated with Moore, and most of his verse has the diction, scenery, and metrical effect of Lalla Rookh. Here, for example, are the opening lines of The Fairy of the Stream, which might easily be mistaken for a passage from The Fire-worshippers:—

"When years ago, a happy child,
By birds, and flowers, and water flowing,
And fragrant shrubs all wildly growing,
And fields and waving trees beguiled,

I often sought this silent spot,
And loved to look, and think, and dream,
And gaze upon that sweeping stream,
Till home and friends were all forgot
In thoughts of these fair sylvan haunts;
"Twas such a sweet and soothing place,
That Avarice might forget her wants,
And Trouble's self be lulled to peace,
Beneath the cool and shady bowers,
Enamelled with the wild young flowers
Of every name, and size, and hue,
Which in these vales in spring-time grew."

Our poet was unfortunate in his theme. The stream referred to was the Staunton river, which flows along the boundary of Charlotte County. Nearer its source, as in its more majestic course through North Carolina, it is known as the Roanoke river. But in no part of its course can the melodious numbers of our author successfully domicile a full-grown fairy on its banks or beneath its waters. Naiads may have their homes in the storied streams of the East; but they flee from the cold and untamed streams of the West. The imagination of the average sane American simply refuses to take *The Naiad's Song* seriously:—

"From beneath the green waters, so clear and sweet,
Where the fairest and loveliest naiads meet
Each rosy morn with smiles as bright
And glowing as Aurora's light,
To honor their queen, the fairest of all,
The loveliest flower in Nou-che-mal,
I have come. I have come."

The Southern Literary Messenger for 1848 contains an elaborate and sarcastic review by Poe, or at least in Poe's characteristic vein. After speaking of the Staunton river, the reviewer continues in summarizing the story of the poem: "By

the banks of this stream Mr. Farmer places a susceptible young gentleman (Allan), who falls in love, unfortunately, with two ladies; the one resident of the County (perhaps of Charlotte) bearing the very pretty and not uncommon name of Agnes, the other a creature of fairyland, all grace and gossamer, with a heart full of passion and a very scanty and insufficient wardrobe. The jealousies springing up from this unhappy state of affairs, between Pirouz, (for that is the unchristian appellation of the fairy,) and Agnes, furnish the material of the story." There is of course a tragic ending, for Allan cannot be possessed by both ladies; and it is the wand of the fairy that finally triumphs over the merely human attractions of Agnes, who at last in her sorrow and despair seeks rest beneath the waters of the stream.

Alceste is an Eastern tale told with a passionate energy not unworthy of Moore. Under Twilight Hours are found several short poems of genuine poetic thought and expression; but—

"The trail of Tom Moore is over them all."

E. M. P. Rose.—The Poetry of Locofocoism, by E. M. P. Rose, is a small volume reflecting a phase of the political history of our country. The work contains some eighteen lyrics which belong to the species now called campaign poetry. Those who are familiar with the history of the political parties of America will recognize the designation "Loco-Focos" as a nickname applied to a part of the Democratic party a few decades before the Civil War. The author of The Poetry of Locofocoism was a Whig; and in two or three presidential campaigns he served, in a local sphere, as the campaign poet of his party. A personal insult from a Democratic editor gave edge to his political songs.

The volume in question contains a preface from the pen of "A Democratic Friend." "Some years ago," he informs us,

"its author, a young man, was almost entirely deprived of eyesight by the explosion of percussion caps. Since which time he has been compelled to abandon business; but possessing a strong and vigorous mind, and a bright poetic fancy, he has amused himself by employing others to read to him on political and other subjects. From the stock of information thus obtained, he has compiled a number of small poems, whose style, poetry, and excellence, have been applauded by the more intelligent of all parties. He now being strongly solicited by his friends, has consented to present to the public his poem, partly because it affords him amusement, and partly because it presents an opportunity to resent a gross and ungentlemanly insult or attack upon his sad misfortune by the editor of the Steubenville Union."

The unlucky editor had accused our author, whom he designates "a poor blind boy," of singing a "horrid-ginal" poem at a Taylor Club organized by the Whigs. In reply the poet discharges a five-page lyric, the quality of which is made perfectly clear by a stanza or two:—

"He was a villain in his youth,
Still acting the rogue's part—
He never likes to hear the truth,
It shocks his guilty heart.

Desperate indeed must be their hope,
When they employ such trash
As May, who does deserve a rope
More than the people's cash."

President Polk and General Cass are the principal targets for our author's campaign amenities. He condemns the Mexican War and the policy of territorial expansion. He intimates, as did President Grant at a later day, that the Democratic party has a native and infallible talent for blundering. In the lyric Cass's Innumerable Lives we read:—

"O sweet Democracy! thou art
Consistent, yet so cruel;
In order to act well your part,
You have to play the fool.

"Cass glorified the late French King,"
By way of financiering;
But now his own praise he would sing
By way of electioneering."

As compared with Lowell's Biglow Papers, which in part treat of the same themes, The Poetry of Locofocoism follows behind at a painful distance.

Mrs. Cheeves.—The author of Sketches in Prose and Verse. a considerable volume published in Baltimore in 1849, was Mrs. E. W. Foote Cheeves. She was born, as the preface states, "in one of the most beautiful and fertile valleys that lie between the Blue Ridge and the Potomac." She early exhibited a strong desire for knowledge, and an indomitable will in its pursuit. She voluntarily sacrificed social gayeties to intellectual culture. In the words of the preface, "She learned that her happiness depended not upon the giddy crowds that whirl through the mazes of fashionable life, and sought it in such engagements as were better suited to her disposition and habits."

After the death of her husband in 1844—an amiable and successful physician—Mrs. Cheeves was defrauded, it seems, out of the considerable property that should have come to her. The biographical sketch, which was prepared by a friend, must tell

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This was Louis Philippe, of whom Cass gave a favorable account in his King, Court, and Government of France (1840).

the rest: "Her situation has compelled her to bring her literary acquirements into requisition. She has published her *Sketches in Prose and Poetry*, with the hope that a generous public will appreciate the necessity by which she is impelled, and extend her the patronage she needs."

The book before us is about equally divided between prose and verse. After a sojourn of some years in Louisiana and Mississippi, the author returned to the Northern Neck of Virginia, and was grieved at the changes which she discovered in the spirit of the people. Education was neglected, and the bold, enterprising spirit of the past was lacking. "Alas!" she exclaims, "these people, though blessed in many respects, are far behind the spirit of the age. Europe, Asia, and even Egypt's benighted plains feel the electric power of progressive thought. And shall Virginia, the native land of a galaxy whose brilliant stars shall ever gem Time's canopy, be found slumbering at her post, when the watchword of nations is onward and upward?"

Mrs. Cheeves, it is stated in the preface, was a relative of Washington; and in her bereavement, she was obliged to struggle with poverty. The respect and sympathy called forth by these facts forbid a criticism of her poetry. Let us hope, as did President Taylor, to whom the book by permission was dedicated, that the most sanguine expectations of the unfortunate authoress were fully realized.

## CHAPTER XI

## Poets from 1850 to 1860

The decade before us was one of the most prolific in the annals of Virginia poetry. Though it can hardly be said that poetry attained a higher excellence, there was an increase in the number of those who wrote verse. Perhaps no other single cause contributed more to this result than the periodical press, the columns of which were a standing invitation to persons of a poetic turn of mind. The Southern Literary Messenger in particular made poetry a prominent feature of every number.

John Esten Cooke.—Of all Virginia authors John Esten Cooke has been one of the most prolific and most popular. His fame rests chiefly on his novels of Colonial days and of the Civil War, in which he was a gallant soldier; but, as frequently happens with writers of fiction, he made an occasional excursion into the realms of poetry. As will be seen, his poetic abilities were not small, and it is to be regretted that he did not leave a larger quantity of verse.

He was born at Winchester, Va., November 3, 1830. While he was yet a boy, his father moved to Richmond, where he studied law and entered upon the practice of his profession. But literature, both prose and verse, divided his affection with law, and he wrote a series of Colonial stories, in which he summoned "from their sleep these stalwart cavaliers, and tender, graceful dames of the far past." The best is perhaps The Virginia Comedians, which was first published anonymously.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, he belonged to the staff of Gen. J. E. B. Stuart, and spent four years of active service in the field. His varied and thrilling experiences he subsequently turned to account in a series of war stories, of which Surry of

Eagle's Nest may be taken as a type. The admirable spirit of these writings is seen in the prologue to Mohun: "Is it wrong to remember the past? I think of it without bitterness. God did it—God the all-wise, the almighty—for his own purpose. I do not indulge in repinings, or reflect with rancor upon the issue of the struggle. I prefer recalling the stirring adventures, the brave voices, the gallant faces."

In his poetry, which was never collected in a volume, Cooke understood the secret of gracefully blending humor and pathos. This is seen in his "ode (so-called) on a late melancholy accident in the Shenandoah Valley," namely, *The Broken Mug*":—

"My mug is broken, my heart is sad!
What woes can fate still hold in store!
The friend I cherished a thousand days
Is smashed to pieces on the floor!
Is shattered and to Limbo gone,
I'll see my mug no more!

"Relic it was of joyous hours
Whose golden memories still allure—
When coffee made of rye we drank,
And gray was all the dress we wore!
When we were paid some cents a month,
But never asked for more.

"In marches long, by day and night,
In raids, hot charges, shocks of war,
Strapped on the saddle at my back
This faithful comrade still I bore—
This old companion, true and tried,
I'll never carry more." 1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The whole poem of twenty-two stanzas is found in Duyckinck's Cyclopaedia of American Literature,

Something of the same pathetic humor is seen in My Powhatan Pipe. But nothing he wrote in verse is better, perhaps, than Honoria Vane, which appeared in the Southern Literary Messenger in May, 1858. Notwithstanding its length, it is given in full:—

"How I loved Honoria Vane
In the pleasant days of old!
Now her image comes again—
Fair and still and cold—
Comes, but scarcely brings me pain,
Thinking of old days.

"Many careless happy hours
In the meadows of Bizare,
Did we linger, gathering flowers
In the fields and forest bowers—
Coming home with idle sighs,
Foolish fondness in my eyes,
As I wove the Autumn blooms—
Faded colors! faint perfumes!—
Into a garland for her hair!

"Happy, happy days of yore,
 In the old Virginia hall!
They will come again no more;
Long ago they sailed from shore—
Far away from the golden shore—
This withered flower is all!
All!—and I chaunt the dirge of hours,
That danced along, all wreathed with flowers;
Of cheeks now pale that once were bright,
Of faded eyes, once full of light:
 The light and joy

Of girl and boy, There in the old Virginia hall.

<sup>\*</sup> See Southern Literary Messenger, May, 1859.

"She was very fair and cold: Did she love me-who can tell? I was never certain. Well. She lies beneath the mould. Pale and cold. The rosy cheek and the hair of gold, Yonder in the dell.

"Beneath the mould?-Honoria Vane? She so proud of her wealth and state? Dead and cold. In the drifting rain. Under the bank where the robins prate? Dead?-and I in another land-I that used to run at her call. Happy, too happy to be her thrall,

Paid with a touch of her lily hand-I alive on a foreign strand. Alive-and merry withal!

"So pass our days. This withered flower Has made me dream for an idle hour! I throw it away.

And muse and say.

Has memory brought me pain?

We are flitting leaves on a mighty stream, The days of our life are a passing dream: Like leaves we are gliding away!

> Am I growing old? Like a tale that is told.

Come back the voices at old Bizare:

On the ocean strand. In a far-off land,

An exile dreams of a woman's hair,

But sheds no tears

When her face re-appears.

When he thinks how she lies in the drifting rain! My heart's very cold!

I am growing old.

Honoria Vane."



ABRAM JOSEPH RYAN



Mary S. Whitaker.—In the volume of *Poems*, written by Mrs. Mary S. Whitaker and published in 1850—a work of 300 pages—we have another good example of the old-fashioned preface, explaining why the author has consented to the publication of her verse. "Written originally for her own gratification, none of them would have appeared in print save for the approbation of intelligent critics, to whose inspection they were occasionally submitted, and the frequent and urgent solicitation of friends."

The Creole, the first and longest poem, is a romance without intricacy of plot. It is intended to be chiefly descriptive of scenery. Its metre is irregular, in justification of which the authoress refers to the example of Byron and Scott.

A prevailing tone of sadness characterizes the poems. For this characteristic the author offers no apology but her temperament and circumstances. There are times when we all are oppressed with a sense of the tragedy of life, and when we feel unequal to the tasks and burdens laid upon us. But this attitude may easily become weak and morbid; and hence a poem like *The Last Home*, however expressive of occasional moods, can hardly be regarded as healthful and inspiring:—

"O when will earth's hopes no longer betray,
And fade like the visions of morning away?
When the dreamer lies cold
In the dark, dismal mould,
Forever shut out from sunshine and day."

Without rising much above mediocrity, our author's poetry is worthy of respect. It contains no gems, but it reflects no discredit. She had an ideal in her craftsmanship, and this ideal she conformed to with success. She "endeavored to avoid the obscurity and affectation which characterize the style of our modern transcendental bards," she says, "and her verse will receive but little favor at the hands of those who are enamored

of the peculiarities of that school of poets. She has aimed only to express her thoughts and feelings in a clear, simple, and natural style, and if she fail to make herself understood and felt by others, it will not, she flatters herself, be owing to a blamable inattention to the best standards of poetry in the English language, which she has made a study from her early years."

Miss Smiley.—The Poems by Matilda, written by Miss Matilda C. Smiley, afterwards Mrs. Edwards of Loudoun, has a unique history. The poems were composed by Miss Smiley while she was at school, and were published by a friend, the Rev. George W. Nolley, who had confidence in their merit, in order to raise money to enable the young authoress to complete her education. The ministers of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Church subscribed for fifteen hundred copies before the book was put to press—a fact that shows at once, perhaps, the strength of their faith and the breadth of their liberality.

Miss Smiley was a native of Nelson County, Va., and having been left an orphan by the death of her father, she was deprived of early educational advantages. But the poetic baptism was upon her, and she gave herself to the cultivation of the Muses, "sometimes through the medium of books, but more particularly in the works of nature; in the waters of a beautiful river that washes the base of her native hill, in the wild mountain scenery that rises in magnificence from the opposite shore, and in the romantic hills and dales that surround it in every direction."

The themes of the book are drawn from nature and from the incidents of ordinary life. The Phases of a Woman's Life describes the well-rounded tragedy from childhood to the grave. The Peaks of Otter worthily celebrates those towering summits.

¹ Tye river in Nelson County.

The realm of religion is frequently touched upon, as in A Hope in Heaven, The Mercy-Seat, and Thoughts on Immortality. But it is the beauty and grandeur of nature that inspire most of the songs.

The first poem of the book, and one of the best, is entitled *Poetry*. Though it repeats a sentiment of Wordsworth's, it is probably the expression of the author's own experience:—

"O! there is more of poetry
In the sweet hymn of birds,
Than all that the poets could ever breathe
In all the chime of words;
More music in one thrilling note,
Soft-gushing from a mock-bird's throat,
Than ever has flowed from minstrel's lyre,
However warmed with hallowed fire.

"There is a world of poetry
In flowers and trees and rills;
And stanzas of immortal song
Are echoed through the hills;
The winds and waves, the bending grass
That trembles where the waters pass;
The stars that twinkled in the sky
Are rich with heaven-born minstrelsy."

The Storm-King exhibits Miss Smiley's descriptive powers in their greatest vigor. The Storm-King has met a gallant ship freighted with life and joy:—

"But I swung them up on giant waves,
Then down in the surging sea,
And I clapped my hands at their horrid shrieks,
And laughed their fear to see;
Down, down, still down in the boiling sea
That ship and its crew I tossed,
Till none were left of its noble band,
To mourn o'er companions lost."

Sing Again That Simple Strain illustrates the wonderful power resident in a long vanished but resuscitated melody:—

"Then touch those thrilling notes again,
"Tis not an idle prayer;
You do not know how many bright,
Sweet memories are there;
You do not know how much of joy
Dwells in that simple strain;
You do not know how dear it is—
O sing that song again!"

It will be recognized that these poems were at least full of promise. It is to be regretted that no subsequent volume of deeper, richer melody ever came from the same pen to ennoble Virginia minstrelsy.

C. Toler Wolfe.—C. Toler Wolfe was born at Stephens City about 1810. Without more than an elementary education, he became a roving character—an eccentric sort of genius who could not long remain satisfied at one place. He was a printer by trade, but varied its irregular pursuit by acting with theatrical troupes. He was brilliant and versatile; and though he sometimes turned his thoughts to the deeper aspects of life, he was mostly content to laugh at its follies and satirize its vanities. He did not always heed his own warning against "imbibing potations deep;" but, like Walter Scott, "whether drunk or sober, he was aye the gentleman."

In 1852 he published at Winchester, which he regarded as his home, a little volume entitled A Book of Odds and Ends. The work, consisting of mingled poetry and prose, answers to its title. It gives us a clear conception of the author; and, as many of the pieces have their place of composition indicated, it enables us to follow him in his wanderings from New York to the West Indies. He did not take authorship too seriously, and

wrote his book, as he tells us in a whimsical poetic preface, for readers—

"Who tire of old, and wish for something new, To pass a listless hour or so away."

He did not write for critics-

"Who tear in bits what other men indite, And half the time can't tell the wrong from right."

His aim was not so much to make the world better, as to make it happier:—

"To change the grave to gay—the melancholic Turn from their mopish moods to those of frolic, And so grow fat, instead of useless whinings At what they can't avoid, and vain repinings O'er ills that daily hem them around about, At which 'tis cheaper far to laugh than pout, Is my sincere intent."

Our author served in the Mexican War—let us hope—as a gallant soldier. He remained unmarried; and in his first poem *The Bachelor*, he attempts, with much misogyny, to justify his celibacy. His experience with the opposite sex must have been singularly unhappy; for he declares—

"That most of womankind are sheer deceit,"

and that

"Woman has always proved a wo-to-man!"

The Stormy Petrel, written in the West Indies, is a serious poem throughout, and not destitute of excellence, as may be seen from a single stanza:—

"Over the sea! over the sea!

Where the wild waves sing the funeral dirge

Of ships that went down in the foaming surge,

The petrel pursueth her path

To her beetling nest on the surf-lashed shore,

Where she reareth her young in the ocean's roar,

Secure from the tempest's wrath."

This eccentric genius, who preferred to laugh at the foolish world, had his serious moments of reflection. He could indite a reverent Address to the Deity, and moralize on the Passage of Time; and occasionally, as with more serious persons, his thoughts fondly turned to the scenes of childhood:—

"You remember the dear old mill, friend Bob,
It was painted a blood-red hue,
The pump, and the dairy, and pigeon-house,
And the race where the willows grew?
But many a weary year has passed,
And many a change since then;
We were both of us wayward little boys,
And now we are care-worn men."

Restless, wandering, dissipated, yet the heart of a man beat in our author's bosom, and his soul at times responded to the deeper truths of life.

Mrs. Cabell.—An Odd Volume of Facts and Fiction was published by Mrs. Julia Mayo Cabell in 1852. It is another work—there have been too many of them in Virginia—that appealed to the public, not on the ground of its literary interest or excellence, but in view of some scheme of practical benevolence. In strict justice such works ought to find a place in the history of benevolent enterprises rather than in the history of literature. An examination of these books is apt to reveal the fact that, as a rule, they have only a distant relation to literature.

The benevolent and commendable purpose of the author is thus explained: A workhouse being an acknowledged necessity in Richmond, "I have resolved (perhaps not wisely but certainly with good intent) to attempt digging its foundation by means of this home-spun volume—the products of the sale of which, after paying the costs of publication, will be appropriated to that purpose; and I doubt not that the building in question being thus begun, other funds will be contributed to carry up its superstructure."

The greater part of the volume is prose. Nearly half of it is taken up with letters of travel abroad, which were first published in the Southern Literary Messenger, and may still be read with interest. To keen observation Mrs. Cabell added the power of lively description. Most of the poetry, consisting of ballads, elegies, enigmas, and epigrams, is of the average quality of the time. The numerous brief elegies on the death of friends are filled with the usual common metre consolations. One looks in vain for that lyric passion in which—

"The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

James Avis Bartley.—James Avis Bartley was born in Louisa County, Va., August 2, 1830. He was noted in childhood for his aptitude in study, and it is said that before the completion of his twelfth year he had read the Aeneid. He entered Emory and Henry College in the fall of 1849, where three years later he took his degree. In 1855 he attended the University of Virginia, and after the war, in 1868-'69, he was a teacher of English in the Baltimore Female College.

In 1855 he published a volume entitled Lays of Ancient Virginia and Other Poems. In the preface he displays a valorous attitude toward his critics. While hoping for generous treatment, he does not intend to allow those vultures of literature to prey upon him with impunity! "Enchanted myself," he frankly says, "the desire to enchant others seized me. The 'Poet's Enchanted Life' is a gallery of poetic pictures of nature. Most of the minor and miscellaneous pieces breathe the spirit of virtuous affection. If critics censure me unjustly or intemperately, I will fight them—but I hope to find them, as well as you, dear Public, very kind friends of a loving author."

This volume contains a pleasing variety of verse, but the sentimental, perhaps, predominates. Oh, Blue-Eyed Maid, I Sigh for Thee, though it seems an echo of Burns, is fairly representative of the poet's skill and grace:—

"Oh, blue-eyed maid, I sigh for thee
At gentle twilight's close,
When music dies upon the lea,
And dew-drops wet the rose.
I look on tranquil nature round,
And list to music's fall,
And think but half their charms are found,
Since thou art far from all."

"Oh, blue-eyed maid, the gorgeous beams
That light a monarch's hall,
The glittering wealth of golden streams,
To me were darkness all,
Unless thy light of loveliness
Adorned the regal scene,
And thou bedecked in royal dress
Shouldst reign my loving queen."

In 1882 Professor Bartley published a second volume of Poems. The opening poem celebrates My Home and breathes

the passionate fondness which the true Virginian has always manifested for his native State:—

"Ah! though I wander borne by mystic fate
Through other lands, how oft shall memory paint
The dearer scenes of my Virginia home!
I'll hope, at length my hapless wandering o'er,
To come and yield my breath back gently here,
To the wild breeze that breathes its low sweet hymn
Among the oak-tree tops to-day, and mix
My mouldering form with this beloved earth."

The poems, which consist of brief lyrics, are chiefly sentimental and patriotic. The poet does not mock at domestic life; and in Wedlock and Wedded Love at Home he finds—

"The image lost of Heaven."

Many features of the Virginia landscape appeal to his sensibilities; and so we find Blue Virginia Mountains, The James River, Hills of Orange, and Rapid Anna. But he has written nothing better than The Old House, in which he expresses what all of us have felt in a mystical way at the sight of a ruined dwelling. It consists of two stanzas as follows:—

"The house is old, its guests are gone,
Who made its former cheer:
Hard by the road it lingers on,
But no one dwelleth here.
The beggar has forgot its door,
Though now it always stands
And seems to ask a guest once more,
With open outstretched hands.

"The moss-grown walls to ruin fall
In sad and sure decay—
And ere the spring's gay festival
It will have passed away,

My heart is sinking with it there,
And clings about its walls,
For worn at length by time and care,
Itself to ruin falls."

In forming our estimate of Mr. Bartley's poetry we may safely agree with the critic to whom our author wrote in A Letter of Reply—

"You own my verse is good, yet not so good As gods will hear in their sublime abode."

B. W. Davis.—Little more need be said of Poetry on Several Subjects for the People, written by B. W. Davis and published in Richmond in 1855, than is contained in the author's address to the public: "It is hoped that these unpretending little poems will be favorably received by the highly esteemed community, among whom the author, as an humble teacher of babes, has labored long and faithfully for small emolument. If they should afford a short entertainment to the reader, and excite some emotions of good influence, they will have accomplished their mission; and the writer's best reward will be the consciousness of good design and the gratification of its accomplishment."

The titles of the five poems in this pamphlet are The Babe of California, Mary at the Grave of Jesus, Mildred in Heaven, Faith, Hope and Charity, and One Fold and One Shepherd—all proper in sentiment and adorned with correct rhymes.

James Fitz.—Mr. Fitz, of Albemarle County, Va., is the author of a Gallery of Poetic Pictures, which, as stated on the title page, comprises "true portraits and fancy sketches, interspersed with humorous, moral, and solemn pieces, together with historic, patriotic, and sentimental poems, and memories of the past." It was published in Richmond in 1857. The scope of the work, it will be noticed, was sufficiently comprehensive; and had the

execution equaled the plan, the work might have been a real addition to Virginia verse.

The verse was written, as the preface tells us, in the brief and disconnected intervals between "the arduous and imperious duties of business occupations," which monopolized the greater part of his time. "Laboring under incessant occupation and bereft of the favors of fortune, 'the lucid moments' that could be devoted to poesy were few and far between—yet were they pleasurable; and viewed as sunny spots smiling in the blue azure of a clouded sky."

These statements the author makes by way of apology; for, under the circumstances, he says, "skillful arrangement and polished execution are things not reasonably to be expected." He offers his verse "to an indulgent public, with unaffected hesitation and diffidence; and this is not said for the purpose of 'deprecating the censures of critics by profession; but merely to be speak the favor and candor of that larger portion of readers who are willing to be pleased with the best efforts that could be expected under the circumstances."

"Brief and to the point," the author tells us, "has ever been his motto;" but in this matter, as often happens in life, his principle is better than his practice. The fact is that few writers of verse in his day understood the value of selection and self-restraint. These classic qualities are almost always lacking. In the volume under consideration fancy and feeling are confessedly subordinated to "truth of incident and narrative"—a method that inevitably imparts a prosy quality to the verse.

In the little poem entitled Sportsmen, Spare the Small Birds, our author makes an appeal far more sage and humane than poetical or grammatical:—

"The sparrow, blue-bird, and the wren,
Each have a part to them assigned:
The farmer knows how useful they,
And many others of their kind,
Who chase the insects through the air,
Or find them on the furrowed ground,
And with their little beaks destroy
What roving travelers are found."

One stanza more from Recollections of Pleasant Valley, where the author lived, will suffice; it is equal to anything else in the book, though it will be observed that he adheres strictly to the facts. It describes a machine shop with which he was familiar in his boyhood:—

"The water-wheel is still erect,
But all the wheels are still;
And silence reigns forever more
In that deserted mill.
No more the carving gouge is plied
To shape the whirling wood;
Nor do we hear the buzzing saw
That in the corner stood."

Most of us have such memories, and by a magic touch time somehow glorifies them with a tender pathos.

Charles Carter Lee.—Charles Carter Lee is the author of Virginia Georgics, Written for the Hole and Corner Club of Powhatan, and published in Richmond in 1858. These poems, as the name indicates, are devoted to agriculture. They may be lacking in the dignity of Virgil, but with mingled humor and sense they convey much useful advice about farming. The author was a scholar as well as farmer; and though written fifty years ago, the Georgics might still be read with interest and profit. In spite of the advance of science and the spread of intelligence, there are still, it seems, some farmers in Vir-

ginia who, by a blind persistence of hope, expect miracles from impoverished land.

The volume under consideration contains four *Georgics* of some eight hundred lines each. The general style and spirit may be judged from the opening lines:—

"In things the same the greatest difference seen Is that perhaps between the fat and lean: None know the steed his master rode in pride, In the poor jade that on the common died; And e'en the face of beauty, though it rise Above decay in soul-revealing eyes—
Yet the pale cheek and lustre-lacking skin Betray the difference between plump and thin. But of all things, what chiefly lose their charms, As they grow poor and wasted, are our farms."

To encourage the agricultural community to keep up the fertility of the soil is the aim of the poet's verse; and to this end he lays down many rules, both negative and positive, which are worth remembering and applying. One negative rule—

"Is, never buy what you can raise at home."

But our author places greatest emphasis on what is positive:-

"Now for a positive rule—have sense and nerve
Ne'er from this one when, while you can, to swerve:
Reduce the bulk of what from your plantation
You sell, to cost the least for transportation;
Thus all the offal to your land you'll give,
And while you live enable that to live."

After due elaboration and convincing illustration, he continues:—

"Another positive rule, alike of sense,
And what is better still, benevolence,
(For in delightful harmony are joined
All the best promptings of the heart and mind,)

Is to keep fat, and to the utmost fed,
Whatever on your farm is worked or bred.
There is no maxim in economy's store
Than this more precious—Nothing pays that's poor."

Like the true Virginian from the eastern part of the State, Mr. Lee had a genuine fondness for the horse and a chivalrous appreciation of his noble qualities—

> "Who to our wishes yields unbounded sway, And often rather dies than disobey."

The sight of an ill-fed horse stirred his sympathies:-

"Behold him now upon our wasted lands,
How high in bone, how low in flesh he stands!
Sore-backed perhaps, his lofty pride appalled,
His breast with collar, rump with breech-bands galled,
With scarce of his original self one trace,
The measure of gratitude in the human race.

Yet such a horse appropriately stands A wasted monument of wasted lands; Galled like the hills, poor as the valleys by him, And joy to naught but buzzards as they eye him."

Whether the *Georgics* improved the farming of Powhatan and other parts of the State, there is no means of knowing; but our poet a half century ago, with many a touch of humor, sang what our Commissioner of Agriculture is now telling the people in prose.

John Lewis.—Flowers and Weeds of the Old Dominion is a collection of poems made by John Lewis and published in 1859. It contains poems by four different writers of Virginia. The title given to the first series is *The Bouquet*, which was written by Mrs. Jean Wood and is reviewed elsewhere in this volume.

The second series is called *The Wreath*, "because it was woven by the delicate fingers of a girl," the grand-niece of Mrs. Wood. It is considered under the name of Mrs. Littleford. The third series was written by John Moncure Lewis, the son of the compiler, and is called *The Nosegay*. The last series was written by John Lewis, and includes the productions scattered along between the years 1804 and 1855.

The compiler's object was to illustrate the intellectual life of the people. "The Bill of Rights," he says, "the Constitution, and the law establishing religious freedom give certain evidence of the degree of civilization in Virginia, so far as the outward life is concerned. The inward life is indicated by the effusions of the heart, and the works of the imagination; very few of these have been presented to the public. The reason of this may be inferred from the condition and character of the educated portion of her population. . . . Writing was not a trade, nor literature a profession then, when these poems were written; they were the occasional outpourings of the spirit amid the cares and trials of life devoted to domestic and social duties."

The compiler did not publish all the Virginia poems in his possession. It seems, contrary to what might have been expected, that permission was withheld. "Had I permission," he says, "to publish others in my possession by Virginians, this collection would not only have been greatly enlarged but much improved. Mauvaise honte withholds from public view many gems that lie concealed in the cabinets of the Old Dominion. They would bear comparison with the best productions of American poets which have been published."

The poet-compiler was aware that some of the poems were not of high quality. They were weeds rather than flowers. "But weeds, not less than flowers," he says, "to the philosophic mind, are productions indicating conditions of that portion of the earth's surface on which they grew. So the productions of the

human mind, be they classed with weeds or flowers, are indications not to be disregarded in forming an estimate of the age and the people giving birth to them."

A brief extract or two must suffice to give an idea of our author's manner. The following lines are paraphrased from Cato—

"When all is lost, remember to preserve
Your honor spotless, and your conscience clear;
From their safe counsels never, never swerve,
And thou art rich in all that's worth our care."

In A Wish, written in mild Scottish brogue, the author's ideal of young womanhood is expressed:—

"Give me the lass unspoilt by praise,
Whose graceful mien and bonnie looks
Impress my heart, inspire my lays,
Who yet has read no blethering books.

"Her beauty must not dazzling shine, Sae bright it blinds hersel' and me, A mind containing fire divine, Aft sparkling from her hazel ee."

Many of the poems are slightly personal ones, while others, as *The River Potomac*, contain reminiscences of the author's Virginia home. There are no flights that scale the mountain summits of song.

John Moncure Lewis.—John Moncure Lewis was the author of *The Nosegay* in the collection of poems just discussed. He died at the age of twenty-five, "leaving the odor of his name and the memory of his talents and his virtues." His best writings—descriptions of scenery and delineations of character—are in prose. The poems of *The Nosegay*, as already stated, were collected by his father; and the death of the young man occurred

while the volume was passing through the press. An acquaintance pays him the tribute of calling him "a poet without pretension—without pedantry, a polished prose-writer—without guile, a social companion—without deceit, a firm and steadfast friend."

With this list of virtues to his credit, it really matters very little to say that he lacked the gifts of high poetic inspiration. He knew this himself, and attempted nothing more than simple rhymes, such as Musings at twilight, words of condolence To a Lady on the Death of her Infant, or a benediction To All the Girls that have ever been, are, or ever will be, about Frankfort, Kentucky.

A few stanzas from Autumn will show our author at his best:—

"Old Autumn is coming to greet us now, In his garb of russet brown; He sends his breeze through the forest trees, And shakes the ripe nuts down.

"He binds the sheaves and scatters the leaves Of the forest far and wide, And makes the crop of the ripe fruit drop From the orchard in its pride.

"He lures the stag to the mountain crag From his wonted copse and lair, For he loves to leap o'er rocky steep, As he snuffeth the frosty air."

Susan Archer Talley.—Miss Talley, afterwards Mrs. Weiss, was born in Hanover County, Va., in 1835. In her childhood her father moved to Richmond, where her education was interrupted by an incurable attack of deafness. But she had a strong innate thirst for knowledge; and thrown upon her own resources, she became a great reader, and attained a wide range of

knowledge. Her poetic gifts were developed, not only by a close communion with nature, but also by a careful study of the best English masters. Tennyson was evidently a favorite poet, and she acquired something of his limpid versification and fine artistic quality. Sometimes the resemblance is disagreeably obstrusive, as in the weird tale of *Ennerslie*:—

"Fading are the summer leaves,
The fields are rich with golden sheaves;
Her silken scarf the lady weaves
Wearily—wearily;
Her cheek hath lost its summer bloom,
Her lovely eyes are full of gloom;
She weaveth at her fairy loom,
And looketh down to Ennerslie."

In 1859 Miss Talley published a volume of *Poems*, which exhibits a wide and elevated range of subjects. She sings, not only of the charms of *The Autumn Time*, but also of the elements of *Genius* and the visions of *The Land of Dreams*. Her work is characterized by a poetic feeling and artistic expression, which give her volume distinction among the productions of the time.

In Looks and Words she distinguishes between professions and reality, as the latter is revealed in the eyes:—

"For eyes reveal the mysteries
That words refuse to tell;
And truth lies hidden in their depths,
As in a silent well.

"But when the soul is deeply stirred,
And eyes encounter eyes,
The mystic veil is rent away,
And all before us lies.

"Thus heart to heart, and soul to soul,
Their mysteries unfold;
What thousand words might never tell,
A single glance hath told."

In a Summer Noon Day Dream, there are fine descriptive touches united with fitting harmony:—

"Within my open window floats
A slumbrous breath of roses,
And in the softly shaded room
Silence itself reposes;
And liquid lusters on the wall
Cool, rippling waves resemble,
As to and fro, with motion slow,
The leafy shadows tremble.

"A sense of silence and repose,
Of slow and tranquil motion;
A murmur as of sleeping winds
Upon a sleeping ocean;
And softly o'er my senses steals
A luxury Elysian,
And all delights of drowsy thought
Are mingled in my vision."

But in no other of her poems, perhaps, is the liquid flow of her verse better illustrated than in *Airley*, which, notwithstanding its length, is inserted in full:—

"Oh, greenly grow the alder boughs
Upon the banks of Airley,
And on the silver river's breast
The lilies blossom fairly;
With blithesome echoes, far and near,
The sylvan shades are ringing,
And gaily in the hazel copse
The merle and mavis singing.

"But Airley towers are lonely now,
And Airley halls are dreary,—
And though the sun be bright without,
The hearts within are weary;
For she that was the light of all,
The chieftain's lovely daughter,
Hath fled away with Roden's Knight
Across the stormy water.

"He met her in the shady wood,
He wooed her by the river;
He swore by all the shining stars
To love but her forever.
And first she smiled, and then she wept—
Her heart was troubled sairly;
She gazed upon her lover's face,
And then she looked on Airley.

"Her brow beneath the moonbeams pale
Was beautiful and holy,
As on her ear his accents fell
So tenderly and lowly;
She could but list the honeyed words,
She could but love him dearly;
She stepped into his bonny boat,
And fled away from Airley.

"Her cheek was like a summer rose,
Her smile like summer weather—
Her fairy footstep left the dew
Upon the purple heather;
Oh, where shall we another find
Whose beauty blooms so rarely?
'Tis morning now on Roden's halls,
And midnight upon Airley.

"Yet dwelleth she, a happy bride,
Beyond the Roden water,
And singeth to her father's foe
The songs her mother taught her.

Oh, we shall mourn her many a day,
Oh, we shall miss her sairly;
Yet happy is the Roden chief
To win the pride of Airley."

Mrs. Jean Wood.—Mrs. Jean Wood was the daughter of the Rev. John Moncure. As might be inferred from her name, she sprang from Scottish ancestry; and in her writings she has frequently shown a fondness for the Scottish dialect, which she handled with rare felicity. She was the wife of General James Wood, of Frederick County, Va., who distinguished himself in the Revolutionary War, and afterwards became the Governor of Virginia (1796-1799).

Mrs. Wood died in 1823. She left a volume of poems in manuscript, which is favorably reviewed in the Southern Literary Messenger for January, 1835. From this review we learn that "she was, in the justest sense, a mother in Israel,—a lady of shining Christian benevolence, whose kindly feelings towards her race did not consist in mere sentiment only, but were evinced in a life of active, useful, and unostentatious charities and labors of love."

Mrs. Wood found relaxation from her labors of piety and her duties of social life in poetry. "Literature," continues the review already quoted, "was to her the solace which refreshed the intervals in her works of goodness; it furnished that balmy repose to the spirit, which it often needs amidst the conflicts and agitations of human life, even in its most favored condition." But the extent to which she had carried her poetical efforts was not, it seems, suspected even by her intimate friends.

As already indicated, the poems of Mrs. Wood were first published under the title *The Bouquet* by Mr. John Lewis in Frankfort, Ky. They formed the first part of the collection known as *Flowers and Weeds of the Old Dominion*. The best of Mrs. Wood's pieces are her songs, several of which

were popular in her day; and it is said that the one beginning-

"Oh, come, will ye gang, bonnie lassie, wi' me"-

was sung by persons who thought "they were carolling the 'wood notes wild' of Scotia's sweetest bard." The best of the songs, from the poetic point of view, is the following:—

"When spring begins her flowery reign,
And birds sing forth divinely,
And lassies sweet, a blithesome train,
Smile on their lads so kindly;
Then ilka night, with steps full light,
With heart so gay and cheery,
Out o'er the brae, I take my way
To thee, mine ain kind dearie.

"When nature in gay dress is seen,
And summer sun returning
Makes trees put on their robe of green
To shield us from its burning;
When sultry day shuts in its ray,
I'm heartsome then and airy,
As o'er the brae I take my way
To thee, mine ain kind dearie."

In mature life death invaded the family circle of Mrs. Wood, and cast a permanent shadow over her spirit. Her poems naturally breathe a sadder strain. But "in society," we are told, "she forced herself to be cheerful, and while she was making glad, by her great powers to please, the hearts of others, anguish like the 'worm i' the bud' was gnawing her own. In many of her poems her tears flow freely, mitigating her woe. In solitude she indulged in grief, but her position in society imposed upon her the necessity of self-command, the duty of entertaining many persons which she performed with consummate ability, even while her heart was bleeding."

In her Wish at Fifty-four, after the charms of social prestige and gayety had been found unsatisfying, her heart turns longingly to the simplicity of a quiet, modest home:—

"I'd ask a little pleasure ground,
Before my window spread,
With verdant hedge encumbered round,
And many a flowery bed;
I'd have no turf, but gravel dry,
Through my neat walks extend,
Which shady trees, with branches high,
From summer's suns defend."

Here with "a friend, a book, a cheerful fire" she could dwell content.

For the rest, we may adopt the moderate language of the Southern Literary Messenger: "We do not claim for Mrs. Wood very extraordinary powers in this enchanting department of literary effort,—for how few of the thousands who have ever essayed to climb the hill of Parnassus have reached its highest rinnacle; and on the contrary, how many have been content to tune their unambitious lays in humble seclusion—without courting or even desiring renown? Mrs. Wood wrote neither for fame nor the public eye, and it is this circumstance alone which will impart an additional interest to the natural and unstudied effusions of her muse."

William H. Holcombe.—William Henry Holcombe was a native of Lynchburg, Va., where he first saw the light in 1825. He was educated at Washington College, now Washington and Lee University, and afterwards completed a medical course at the University of Pennsylvania. At a later time he became a convert to homœopathy,—a change which he ably defended in a polemical pamphlet. He also adopted what has been called "Swedenborg's divine philosophy, theosophy, and theology."

A number of his poems are based on the teachings of the Swedish theologian, and to clarify their obscurity, the author has supplied copious notes.

In 1850 Dr. Holcombe moved to Cincinnati and later took up his residence in New Orleans. His *Poems*, a volume of 360 pages, appeared in New York in 1860. In the preface he says: "The pursuit of literature has been with me, not a business, but an occasional recreation. Assiduous devotion to the medical profession for the last fifteen years has left me little time or inclination to cultivate the poetic art. Still, the material for a small volume has gradually accumulated, and with diffidence I make my first, and most probably my last contribution to the stock of American poetry." The volume in question possesses unusual merit; for, besides his technical skill in versification, Dr. Holcombe was a man of large attainments and original thought.

The poems, nearly a hundred in number, cover a wide range. The versatility of the author has touched upon every theme from the rapture of *Kisses* to the profundities of *Transcendentalism*, and always with grace and power. The underlying philosophy of his deepest poetry is the fancied recognition of a correspondence between human life and the inanimate forms of nature—an idea borrowed from Swedenborg:—

"Our souls are mirrored all around us here, Our lives repeated in the forms of nature."

We find in him something of the mystical or transcendental spirit met with in Emerson. Take, for example, the little poem The Invisible:—

"I've heard sweet bells upon the breeze
When none were ringing,
And the soft sound of waving trees,
And insect-singing.

"Though in the woodland, still and deep,
No leaf was falling,
And e'en the clouds were laid asleep,
They were spirits calling:

"Voices they were with whisperings Of friends departed; Angels they were with comfortings For the weary-hearted."

But Dr. Holcombe was not insensible to the beauty of nature, though he was not satisfied with that alone. In My Lyre he traces his inspiration, in part at least, to the charm of natural objects:—

"I found it in the mountain wood,
Hung high upon the forest tree;
The winds that loved the soltitude,
The waves that to the sea
Bounded along,
In light and song,
Gave to these strings their melody."

In his varied repertory of song, love in all its noble forms finds a place. To him it seems "the only treasure":—

"With many passions, great and small,
We restless souls are living,
But love's the sweetest of them all
In getting or in giving:
For prior both in time and worth
This sacred flame was given;
All others have been born on earth,
But love is part of heaven.
Love me, love me, more and more,
Love me without measure;
Kiss me, kiss me, o'er and o'er.

Love's the only treasure."

The author of this volume of poems handled blank verse with remarkable skill. It came to him as a natural vehicle for the utterance of elevated thought. In his *New Thanatopsis*, which is evidently intended as a reply to Bryant's great poem, he tells us of his search "for Death throughout the universe":—

"But in vain
I scanned the range of being infinite,
From God to angels and through men to earth,
To beast, bird, serpent, and the ocean tribes,
To worms and flowers, and the atomic forms
Of crystalline creations. Change had been,
Perpetual evolution and fresh life,
And metamorphoses to higher states,
An orderly progress, like the building up
Of pyramids from earth's material base
Into the fields of sunlight—but no Death."

The volume closes with a tragedy in two acts entitled Agathe. A brief examination is sufficient to reveal the fact that it is written with classic finish and classic self-restraint. It is full of passion and poetry. The heroine Agathe was a priestess of the temple of Diana in Greece:—

"Oh she was beautiful!
Her radiating goodness seemed to make
A golden halo round her, which infused
Such peace into the soul one could believe
The music of Elysian bowers remote
Was lulling him to sleep."

Professor Michard.—A small volume, entitled Religio Poetae and written by J. Michard, professor of modern languages, appeared in Richmond in 1860. It is called a trilogy, being divided into three parts, to which are added meditations and notes in prose, setting forth the substantial basis and profound

meaning of the poem. The *Proem* is a deep sigh for communion with the Infinite:—

"Oh! whether borne
On eagle's pinions, or the clouds that fly
Across the jewelled arch of morn,
Oh! let me soar on high;
For I have dreamed and languished long,
Far from those unknown realms of song
That to other worlds belong."

The first part of the trilogy is called *Religio Poetae*. It is at once mystical and profound. Wisdom, love, and power—all of them infinite—should be the themes of the poet's meditation:—

"Thou shalt discover in this contemplation

A power in thy mind before unknown;

For the true source of all high inspiration

Flows from the foot of God's eternal throne.

"Then with the sacred harp go forth inspiring
The ideal pure of truth, beauty, or right:
Or with shrill trump heroic spirits firing;
Or if the oaten pipe thy muse delight."

His conception of the poet's office was far higher than the conception that frequently prevailed in Virginia before the Civil War:—

"And think not some light fancy quickly rendered In easy flowing verses tipped with rhyme, Makes all the poet, or idle dreams engendered Of gay romance at eve in summer time.

"Beware most of thyself, and hope not vainly
That all the perilous ministry may dare,
Nor in the temple enter thou profanely,
Doomed to undying glory or despair."

The second part of the trilogy is made up of sonnets; and it is hardly going too far to say that, as a whole, they are the best ever written in Virginia. Two are given, though there is a temptation to give more. Here is his treatment of a very old theme:—

"A morning mist among the blue hills lost,

A blade of grass that withers on the ground,
A subtly melting tracery of frost
Upon the crystal pane in winter found;
The echo of an echo, fleeting sound,
The foam of ocean wave by wild winds tossed
On rocks that overlook the surges round,
By bark of mortal mould as yet uncrossed;
A cloud that fades away even as we gaze,
A drop of dew exhaled within an hour,
A leaf snapped from the tree in autumn days,
A broken reed, or a decaying flower—
These, we say, life resembles; yet we haste
That life so brief to dissipate and waste."

There is sound philosophy, as well as true piety, in the following:—

"Let him who cannot what he will obtain,
Will what he can: for that which cannot be
'Tis folly to desire; then wise is he
Who knows from what he cannot, to refrain;
Such, then, the source of all our joy or pain,
What we should will to see or not to see;
Therefore he only can, whose acts agree
With duty's law, constant, direct, and plain.
Not always what we can are we to will;
Oft things prove bitter that most sweet appear;
Oft have I mourned at having what I sought;
Then, reader of these lines, wouldst thou be still
True to thyself and to all others dear,
Will always to perform that which thou ought."

The last part of the trilogy is entitled *The Samaritan Woman*, and is a poetic rendering and expansion of the gospel narrative. From what has been said it will appear that Professor Michard was a poet of excellent abilities; and had the Civil War not intervened, it is possible that his genius might have brought still higher lustre to Virginia poetry.

#### IV

# PERIOD OF THE CIVIL WAR (1861-1870)

### CHAPTER XII

## War Poetry in Virginia

The Civil War—the great conflict between the North and the South—was inevitable. The two sections of our country were divided in regard to slavery and State rights; and the feeling of opposition was intensified by self-interest and moral conviction. The efforts of political leaders to effect a satisfactory compromise resulted necessarily in only temporary measures. The differences were too deep to be settled otherwise than by the sword. There was equal honesty of conviction and the same determination of purpose on both sides; and consequently a permanent peace could be secured only by a triumph of arms. So it has always been in the history of the world.

The people of the South, holding firmly to the political theory of State sovereignty, believed they had a right, when their interests were menaced or interfered with, to withdraw from the Union. For them, therefore, secession was a natural solution of the problem. But the people of the North held with equal firmness to the indissoluble character of the Union. As a result, they could not consent to the peaceful withdrawal of the Southern States. The act of secession thus naturally led to an appeal to arms.

The difficulties and dangers of the situation were increased by mutual prejudice and ignorance. The great lines of railroad ran east and west, and hence there was comparatively little intercourse between the two great divisions of our country. A literature of passionate earnestness had aroused in the North a strong resentment against the system of slavery; and the pictures presented both in fiction and poetry were often unjust to Southern life and character. On the other hand, the people of the South were disposed to regard anti-slavery legislation and armed coercion as acts of tyranny, and to underrate the strength and courage of those who were contemptuously designated "Yankees." A better mutual acquaintance would have promoted a deeper respect and confidence, and delayed, perhaps, the inevitable conflict.

When the crisis came, Virginia was not hasty in her action. Having taken a prominent part in the formation of the American Union, she was loth to bring about its dissolution. Accordingly, she proposed a peace congress to meet in Washington February 4, 1861. When nothing resulted from the meeting of this congress, and when President Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand troops—an act equivalent to a declaration of war—Virginia felt in honor bound to cast her lot with the other States of the South; and though she knew the brunt of the war would be her share, she bravely faced the issue. By a vote of the people, whose martial spirit was kindled to the highest degree, Virginia withdrew from the Union in May, 1861.

War is not unfavorable to at least one department of poetry—that of martial lyrics. When a great struggle stirs the souls of a people to their depths, there will be an outburst of song. In war, as in the piping times of peace, the mouth will utter what is in the heart. The Civil War, on both sides of the Potomac, produced a voluminous body of song, in which the strong sectional feelings of hostility are only too forcefully expressed. But we read them to-day as records, not only of poetic achievement, but also of an unhappy discord which has now, and we hope forever, passed away.

The first poem of the war, written by a Virginian, was perhaps

St. George Tucker's *The Southern Cross*. It appeared in the winter of 1860-61, before the actual outbreak of hostilities. It is very warlike in its denunciation of "the guile of the Puritan demon":—

"And if peace should be hopeless and justice denied,
And war's bloody vulture should flap its black pinions,
Then gladly to arms! while we hurl in our pride
Defiance to tyrants and death to their minions!
With our front in the field, swearing never to yield,
Or return like the Spartan in death on our shield!
And the Cross of the South shall triumphantly wave
As the flag of the free or the pall of the brave!"

The poems at the beginning of the war were full of passion and defiance. It is difficult for us now to realize the intensity of feeling which seized upon every class. The belligerent spirit of Southern women was as fierce and aggressive as that of the men. Before the secession of Virginia, Mrs. Rebecca Tabb, of Gloucester, indignant at the hesitation of the State to take that momentous step, wrote with much intensity of emotion:—

- "Weep! yes, we will weep; but not from coward fears; Poor woman! what has she to give her country save her tears? Were we men we could remember the lessons we were taught How our fathers fought for freedom. Was the boon too dearly bought?
- "We'd remember how the glory is passing from our State, Nor blind our eyes with weeping, and wildly mourn her fate; We'd remember how our fathers had won immortal fame, And prove that we were worthy to bear a patriot's name."

With the women of the State entertaining such bellicose sentiments and urging them in such passionate language, it is not strange that Virginia withdrew from the Union!

After the beginning of hostilities, almost every incident of the

war was celebrated in verse. Dr. William H. Holcombe, whose excellent verse has already come under review, commemorates the death of *Jackson*, the *Alexandria Martyr*, in some strong lines:—

"'Twas not the private insult galled him most,
But public outrage of his country's flag,
To which his patriotic heart had pledged
Its faith as to a bride. The bold, proud chief,
The avenging host, and the swift-coming death,
Appalled him not. Nor life with all its charms,
Nor home, nor wife, nor children could weigh down
The flerce, heroic instincts to destroy
The insolent invader."

Naturally the battle of Manassas, bringing fresh hope and courage to the South, repeatedly was sung. In Virginia's Jewels Miss Rebecca Powell, with triumphant courage in the midst of her tears, celebrates the heroes who fell in that great engagement:—

"Oh! martyrs of Manassas! ye whose names,
Though writ in light, are still more love's than fame's,
Long shall Virginia's sons and daughters tell
How nobly on that bloody day ye fell,
And at a priceless cost redeemed our land
From the fell grasp of the invader's hand.

"Sons of Virginia, falter not—to you
The loved, the tried, the trusted, and the true,
Her hearths, her homes, her sacred honor—all
For which men live, in whose defense they fall—
Your mother gives, be faithful to the trust,
For lo! your brothers' blood calls from the dust."

It is no wonder that with such appeals, which breathe the heroic spirit of the Spartan women of old, that the soldiers of Virginia fought with unsurpassed gallantry and determination.

But the war had not continued long before its terrible scenes

and tragedies began to weigh upon the hearts of the people and to chasten them into a more subdued but not less determined spirit. Among the poems that set forth the tragic side of the war we quote in full the *Battle Eve* of Mrs. Weiss, whose earlier work as Miss Talley has already been reviewed at some length:—

"I see the broad, red setting sun
Sink slowly down the sky,—
I see, amid the cloud-built tents,
His blood-stained standard fly,
And meek, meanwhile, the pallid moon
Looks from her place on high.

"Oh, setting sun, awhile delay!
Linger on sea and shore,—
For a thousand eyes now gaze on thee
That shall not see thee more;
A thousand hearts beat proudly now,
Whose race like thine is o'er!

"Oh, ghastly moon! thy pallid ray
On paler brows shall lie!
On many a torn and bleeding heart,
On many a glazing eye;
And breaking hearts shall live to mourn
For whom 'twere bliss to die."

In Beechenbrook, one of the most popular poems of the war, Mrs. Margaret J. Preston, whose works will be discussed more at length on a subsequent page, vividly brings before us some of the realistic scenes of the great struggle. The following is a picture of camp life and is called The Song of the Snow:—

"Halt! the march is over;
Day is almost done;
Loose the cumbrous knapsack,
Drop the heavy gun;

Chilled and worn and weary,
Wander to and fro,
Seeking wood to kindle
Fires amidst the snow.

"Round the camp-blaze gather,
Heed not sleet nor cold;
Ye are Spartan soldiers,
Strong, and brave, and bold.
Never Xerxian army
Yet subdued a foe,
Who but asked a blanket
On a bed of snow.

"Shivering, 'midst the darkness.
Christian men are found
There devoutly kneeling
On the frozen ground;
Pleading for their country
In its hour of woe,
For its soldiers marching
Shoeless through the snow!

"Lost in heavy slumbers,
Free from toil and strife,
Dreaming of their dear ones—
Home and child and wife;
Tentless they are lying,
While the fires burn low—
Lying in their blankets
'Midst December's snow!"

As we read over the poems of the war, fresh from the hearts of the people, it is pathetic to note the deepening tone of sadness that pervades them. The ardent enthusiasm of the outbreak of the terrible struggle is cooled by the pitiless realities of war. The early hope is quenched in sorrow. The "eloquence of woe" we find in a little poem by Mrs. Fanny Murdaugh Downing entitled Desolate:—

"A weight of suffering my spirit seals,
As I stand of life's sweetest joys bereft
No faith, no hoping a solace yields
To thrilling sorrow, which only feels:
"To-morrow will prove what to-day reveals—
He is taken and I am left,
And long as the world and this life remain,
He will never, never come back again!"

"I calmly speak and quietly smile,
As I take up life's burden of bitter grief;
But memory is gnawing my heart the while,
With a tooth more keen and a touch more wild
Than the ravenous beast on the Spartan child;
A quick, wild anguish beyond relief,
Which racks me, and whispers amid my pain,
'He will never, never come back again!'

"The years will pass and the seasons flow
With the changing freight of joys and cares—
The spring's sweet promise, the summer's glow,
Autumn's treasures and winter's snow;
But never a change nor rest shall I know
From days of duty and nights of tears,
From the aching heart and the burning brain—
'He will never, never come back again!'"

Individual deeds of daring frequently found fitting commemoration in song, though many heroic achievements, lost in the smoke and thunder of battle, have been swallowed up in oblivion. After the terrible battle of Malvern Hill, a Confederate soldier from Louisiana, whose name is unknown, was found fully fifty yards in advance of his line, his hand firmly grasping his musket. This incident has been celebrated in a poem by Wm. Gordon McCabe entitled An Unknown Hero, the last two stanzas of which are here given:—

"Brave soldier of our Southern clime,
No stately song nor brilliant story
Shall hand thy name to future time
As one who gained immortal glory;
But Freedom, with her mailed hand,
Has paused to brush a tear of sorrow,
And placed thee with that chosen band
Who freely poured their life's blood for her.

"And Valor with her royal brow,
And Honor with her stately bearing,
Have surely felt a prouder glow,
When musing on thy peerless daring.
A gallant soldier, all unknown!
Though noisy Fame, we know, shall never
Proclaim thy deeds through every zone,
A hero's crown is thine forever!"

As might be expected, every brave and beloved leader that fell in battle, had his memory enshrined in verse. The dashing gallantry of men like Ashby and Morgan, and the martial prowess of men like Jackson and Lee, strongly appealed to the heart and the imagination of the South. This phase of the war poetry of Virginia is well illustrated in a poem by John R. Thompson on the death of Ashby:—

"To the brave all homage render!
Weep, ye skies of June!
With a radiance pure and tender,
Shine, O saddened moon!
'Dead upon the field of glory!'—
Hero fit for song and story—
Lies our bold dragoon!

"Well they learned, whose hands have slain him, Braver, knightlier foe Never fought 'gainst Moor nor PaynimRode at Tempelstowe:
With a mien how high and joyous,
'Gainst the hordes that would destroy us,
Went he forth, we know.

"Never more, alas! shall sabre
Gleam around his crest—
Fought his fight, fulfilled his labor,
Stilled his manly breast—
All unheard sweet nature's cadence,
'Trump of fame and voice of maidens,
Now he takes his rest.

"Earth that all too soon hath bound him,
Gently wrap his clay!
Linger lovingly around him,
Light of dying day!
Softly fall the summer showers—
Birds and bees among the flowers,
Make the gloom seem gay!

"There, throughout the coming ages,
When his sword is rust,
And his deeds in classic pages—
Mindful of her trust
Shall Virginia, bending lowly,
Still a ceaseless vigil holy
Keep above his dust!"

The heroic spirit with which Virginia and the people accepted the results of the war is as admirable as the courage they displayed on the field. We cannot read the lines in which are voiced their disappointed hopes and invincible spirit without the kindling of a reverent admiration. In Mrs. Margaret J. Preston's Virginia Capta, for example, we read:—

"Look back through all thy storied past,
And sit erect in conscious pride;
No grander heroes ever died—
No sterner battled to the last!

"Weep, if thou wilt, with proud, sad mien,
Thy blasted hopes—thy peace undone;
Yet brave live on—nor seek to shun
Thy fate, like Egypt's conquered queen.

"Though forced a captive's place to fill In the triumphal train—yet these Superbly, like Zenobia, wear Thy chains—Virginia victrix still!"

The Conquered Banner by Abram J. Ryan—a Virginian by birth—is widely known. Written in 1865 shortly after the surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox, it brought comfort to numberless hearts sore with the disappointment and sorrow of defeat:—

"Take that banner down—'tis tattered,
Broken is its staff and shattered,
And the valiant hosts are scattered
Over whom it floated high.
Oh! 'tis hard for us to fold it,
Hard to think there's none to hold it,
Hard that those who once unrolled it
Now must furl it with a sigh.

"Furl that banner! true 'tis gory,
Yet 'tis wreathed around with glory,
And 'twill live in song and story
Though its folds are in the dust;
For its fame on brightest pages,
Penned by poets and by sages,
Shall go sounding down the ages,
Furl its folds though now we must.

"Furl that banner, softly, slowly,
Treat it gently—it is holy—
For it droops above the dead;
Touch it not, unfold it never,
Let it droop then, furled forever,
For its people's hopes are dead."

A deeper note, glorified with the beauty of a divine submission, is struck by Father Ryan in his *Prayer of the South*:—

"My brow is bent beneath a heavy rod!

My face is wan and white with many woes,
But I will lift my poor chained hands to God,
And for my children pray, and for my foes.

Beside the graves where thousands lowly lie,
I kneel—and, weeping for each slaughtered son,
I turn my gaze to my own sunny sky,
And pray, O Father, may thy will be done!

"My heart is filled with anguish deep and vast;
My hopes are buried with my children's dust;
My joys have fled—my tears are flowing fast;
In whom save thee, our Father, shall I trust?
Ah! I forgot thee, Father, long and oft,
When I was happy, rich, and proud, and free;
But conquered now, and crushed, I look aloft,
And sorrow leads me, Father, back to thee."

Mrs. Downing in her *Dixie*, after speaking of the light-hearted confidence with which the South entered upon the war, calls those "blessed" who died before the awful issue was known, and dwells on the difficult task of living and rebuilding its fortunes:—

"To die for Dixie! Oh! how blessed
Are those who early went to rest,
Nor knew the future's awful store,
But deemed the cause they fought for sure
As heaven itself; and so laid down
The cross of earth for glory's crown,
And nobly died for Dixie.

"To live for Dixie! Harder part!
To stay the hand, to still the heart,
To seal the lips, enshroud the past,
To have no future—all o'ercast—

To knit life's broken threads again,

And keep her memory pure from stain—

This is to live for Dixie."

How well the people of the South have responded to the heavy duties laid upon them by the results of the Civil War—how they have lived for Dixie—is now seen in our happy homes, thriving industries and growing cities. Their faces are turned to the future rather than to the past. They are proud of our great united country; and were some new danger to threaten its welfare, nowhere else would there be a readier and more loyal response to its call than in Virginia and the rest of the South.

### CHAPTER XIII

### Poets of the War Period

After the foregoing brief survey of the lyrics connected with the Civil War, we turn to the consideration of the poets who cultivated the Muse and published volumes during the storm and stress of that period. Some of them, as we shall see, survived those trying days, and accomplished important work in the larger and happier time that is still with us. The number of poetic writers is greater than might have been expected—a fact that indicates that literary inspiration is an impulse that often defies the most untoward conditions.

Mrs. Jordan.—Mrs. Cornelia J. M. Jordan, a native and resident of Lynchburg, may justly be ranked as one of the major female poets of Virginia. She has two considerable volumes to her credit—Flowers of Hope and Memory and Echoes from the Cannon; and if her poetry does not attain the greatest heights of lyrical rapture, it is always pure in sentiment and creditable in craftsmanship. There is no straining after the fantastic either in thought or expression. It is the scenes and experiences of ordinary life—religion, death, flowers, friendship, the changing seasons—that appeal to the spirit, and call forth sincerity of utterance.

The Proem to Flowers of Hope and Memory, which appeared in Richmond in 1861, beautifully expresses the scope and spirit of the volume. The first three stanzas are quoted:—

"With loving hands I humbly bring
My little wreath of flowers;
Some gathered from the haunts of men,
And some from wild wood bowers.

"Some blossomed in my life's glad spring,
Others in later years,
And some were culled and woven in
The autumn-time of tears.

"Some grew like sea-weeds, distant far,
By sounding ocean caves,
And some (dearest of all are these)
Have blossomed over graves."

The first poem, The Bride of Heaven, is a very pathetic description of a beautiful and noble-hearted girl who withdrew from society—

"To be henceforth the chosen bride of Christ."

The story is told in effective blank verse. As the heroine, after taking her vow, retired into the gloom and silence of the convent:—

"She only looked a hurried, last farewell,
And then withdrew, leaving a mournful spell
Of gloom upon us, as the massive door
Closed with an echo deep, upon those loved
Retiring footsteps we should hear no more."

The poems in this volume, more than a hundred in number, are brief lyrics, with here and there a bit of blank verse. The Mansion by the Sea is a ballad, in which an aged, grief-stricken man tells the story of his bereavement:—

"The sea-breeze sighed a requiem round
That dim old mansion grey,
As o'er its towers and turrets now
The twilight shadows lay.
And as I turned to leave the strand
The stranger seized my proffered hand:

"'They came not back, in vain I watched
Each coming sail in view;
The story of their fate, alas!
No mortal ever knew.
No wreck was found—a fearful gale
Was all that told the sorrowing tale."

The spirit that animated our author's life finds expression in *Aspirations*. She is content that others should seek wealth and power. But—

"Not for thee
These glittering baubles, not for thee, my soul.
Earth is thy battle-ground, Heaven thy fair home;
Strive to obtain a victor's welcome there.
Live for mankind, thy country—more than all,
Live for thy God, my soul."

Her love of nature appears in Fear of Blindness:-

"I dearly love yon arching sky,
In sunshine and in storm;
Its calm, bright smile, its lightning glance,
Its rainbow's circling form.

"I love the pale, sweet, quiet moon
That lights that sky at even;
And more than all, the holy stars
That gem the brow of heaven.

"I love, ah, well, the woods and streams,
'Mid summer's fervid ray;
'To watch the foaming torrents leap,
The brooklet's sparkling play.

"I love the mountains, old and grand,
The valleys, green and fair;
The flowers that deck the verdant hills,
The birds that swim the air."

A National Hymn for the New Year, written January 1, 1861, is a passionate prayer that the dangers threatening the country might be averted:—

"God of the year! receive our prayer,
In this our country's trying hour;
Unveil thy face—stretch forth thine arm—
And save us by thy mighty power.

"So shall our praise be of thy name,
Our glad hosannas all of thee,
And o'er Columbia still shall wave
The banner of the brave and free."

The Southern Literary Messenger for March, 1861, in a brief review of Flowers of Hope and Memory, says: "Mrs. Jordan's Muse is not of the daring, soaring order. Timid, gentle, tender—it delights to haunt the grassy hillock where the loved and lost are sleeping. Its joy is to catch the mild inspiration of the morning, and interpret it in songs of hope. Hope not of the earth, nor in the earth, but of the land and in the light celestial. There alone are its fulfillings. The tones of its harp are placid, soft, simple, thrilling—the breathing of an unambitious heart, acquainted most with sorrow, and seeking relief in its own music."

Echoes from the Cannon, as the name indicates, is made up chiefly of poems of the Civil War. It contains Corinth, a poem of nearly twenty pages, which commemorates in glowing thought and utterance the Confederate victory in the battle of that name. When the guns are silent at nightfall:—

<sup>&</sup>quot;The moon looks calmly down again, her pale rays kiss the dead, And holy stars keep quiet watch o'er Honor's slumbering head. The foeman's eye looks grimly back o'er all that crimson plain, And frowns to see the fearful work his hand hath wrought in yain."

This poem, with some others, was first published in 1865, and had the distinction of being condemned and burned by General Terry, a provost marshal at that time, as an incendiary document. The entire edition was committed to the flames. But this petty and inconsiderate act of tyranny did not stifle indignation and resentment. A few days afterwards the poetess wrote the Burning of "Corinth," in which, as might naturally be expected, she gives vigorous expression to her opinion of the marshal. No fire can destroy the memories of other days or make ashes of the heroes of the Confederacy:—

"A glorious halo-light surrounds those great historic names,
That will outlive the fading glare of these poor, feeble flames.
Burn on—burn out the simple lines a woman's hand hath traced,
But know that when in ashes laid they will not be effaced."

Richmond: Her Glory and Her Graves, a poem of twenty-two pages, is perhaps the best tribute ever paid to the capital of the Confederacy. Then follow the Battle of Manassas, Our Fallen Brave, The Death of Jackson, The Cadets at New Market, and similar themes relating to scenes and incidents of the war. The last is Farewell to the Flag, a passionate elegy on the "Lost Cause." There is, perhaps, nothing better in the book than the little poem Hope and Wait, which must have brought strength to many a fainting heart when it was written. The last two stanzas are given:—

"Ever in the great life-struggle
They are victors most sublime,
Who despite the downward current
Upward climb.
Upward reach their eager fingers,
E'en when mocked by driving tide,
Still reach higher, holding firmer
Till the winds and waves subside.

"God will bless the hero spirit,
Struggling with its will and might
'Gainst the wrong in earnest battling
For the right.
Only keep your soul's eye upward,
Wrestle bravely—smile at fate—
And to win the victor's guerdon,
Hope and wait."

J. H. Martin.—In 1862 there was published in Richmond a poem entitled *Smith and Pocahontas*. Its author was J. H. Martin, who had written it six years earlier. It could hardly have been composed amidst the absorbing interests and excitements of the Civil War. In giving it to the public, the author expressed a well-founded doubt "whether it possesses sufficient merit to secure for it a favorable reception." The *Southern Literary Messenger* dismissed it with a single line: "Readable, but not of the highest order of merit."

The author was not without judicious friends who frankly told him that he lacked the divine gift of song. But he was wedded to his theme, and persisted in his purpose in spite of Minerva:—

"Then let me still my plan pursue,
Uncramped by rigid rules,
So prized by those who homage yield
To dicta of the schools.
Indulgent public, do not frown,
But tolerate my lay,
And grant me liberty to sing
In my own artless way.
The theme is worthy to attract,
Whate'er may be the rhyme;
Few better e'er engaged the Muse
In all preceding time."

The poem is divided into five cantos, in the first of which is told the story of the hero's rescue by the Indian maiden. A

few lines will show to what extent the exciting scene kindled our author's imagination, and in what artistic form he presented its impressive details:—

"Extended at full length, his head Upon a stone is duly laid: And now, before the maiden's eye, A warrior's club is lifted high, Soon to descend again below, And deal on him a mortal blow. But ere the fatal stroke was made, She sprang upon his neck, and prayed Her father to desist, and spare The life of him endangered there. The savage parent's breast was moved, For he his beauteous daughter loved, Surprised her conduct to behold. That she should ask him to withhold The death-club from his fated foe. Arrest the meditated blow."

The rest of the book is occupied with a versified rendering of Smith's life, as given in his *History of Virginia*. But nowhere do the stirring scenes of that life—not even the storm at sea or the famous duel before Regal—ever lift our author above a mechanical and juvenile versification.

John R. Thompson.—John Reuben Thompson has deserved well of the South both as editor and author. He was born in Richmond, and educated at the University of Virginia, where he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1845. Two years later he became editor of the Southern Literary Messenger; and during the twelve years of his editorial management, he not only maintained a high degree of literary excellence, but also took pains to lend encouragement to Southern writers. In 1863 he went abroad on account of his health, and resided for nearly three



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years in London. His pen, however, was not idle, and he became a contributor to various periodicals, among which were *Punch* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. Shortly after the close of the Civil War, he returned to America, and took up his residence in New York. He became literary editor of the *Evening Post*, a position that he filled with distinction, in spite of declining health, till his death in 1873.

It is a misfortune for Southern letters that the writings of Thompson have not been collected. Several of his longer poems, such as *Virginia*, *Patriotism*, and *Poesy*, *An Essay in Rhyme*, were published in pamphlet form; but most of his lyrics are found scattered through the pages of the *Messenger* and other periodicals. He was not endowed with the highest lyrical power; most of his poems fall short of a complete and satisfying excellence; yet his literary skill almost always imparted to his poems a delicacy of conception and finish that raises them above the commonplace.

In *Poesy*, which was recited before the Literary Society of Columbia College, Washington, in 1859, we have the fullest expression of our author's poetic creed. He boldly rejects the Horatian maxim:—

"That till the mighty prophets come, The part of Poesy is to be dumb."

He has a word of appreciation and praise for the humble singers of our race:—

"O gentle spirits, wheresoe'er you dwell,
On breezy upland or in quiet dell,
Whether you sing in solitude and shade,
Or in the sullen, crowded haunts of trade,—
Whose simple rhyming, in its artless grace,
Has touched some hidden sorrow of the race,
Or taught the world one humble lesson more
Of subtle beauty all unknown before,

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Or soothed one heart, just when its need was sorest, With harmonies of ocean and of forest,— To you be ever honorable meed, In spite of captious Horace and his creed."

The themes of poetry are to be found in nature and human life:—

"All, all are poets on whom God confers
The gift of nature's true interpreters:
While the eternal hills their anthems raise,
And swelling oceans vocalize his praise.

. . . .

"Tis his to turn from nature's outward things,
And trace, with prophet glance, the hidden springs
Of human life and action in the soul,
Whence the unceasing torrents rage and roll
With headlong fury to the shoreless main,
In thunder worthy of his loftiest strain."

The stirring events of 1861 naturally aroused our poet's muse. A Poem for the Times, written in that year, is a vigorous lyric, displaying an energy of thought and expression not often found in the productions of Thompson's refined and gentle spirit:—

"Who talks of Coercion? Who dares to deny
A resolute people their right to be free?
Let him blot out forever one star from the sky,
Or curb with his fetter one wave of the sea.

"Who prates of Coercion? Can love be restored

To bosoms where only resentment may dwell—
Can peace upon earth be proclaimed by the sword,

Or good will among men be established by shell?"

Incidents of the war, called forth some of the poet's sweetest strains. His Ashby, which has frequently been quoted and admired, is given in the preceding chapter. But the most popular of all his poems is his Music in Camp, which, despite its length, follows in full:—

"Two armies covered hill and plain,
Where Rappahannock's waters
Ran deeply crimsoned with the stain
Of battle's recent slaughters.

"The summer clouds lay pitched like tents
In meads of heavenly azure;
And each dread gun of the elements
Slept in its hid embrasure.

"The breeze so softly blew, it made
No forest leaf to quiver,
And the smoke of the random cannonade
Rolled slowly from the river.

"And now, where circling hills looked down
With cannon grimly planted,
O'er listless camp and silent town
The golden sunset slanted.

"When on the fervid air there came
A strain—now rich, now tender;
The music seemed itself aflame
With day's departing splendor.

"A Federal band, which, eve and morn,
Played measures brave and nimble,
Had just struck up, with flute and horn
And lively clash of cymbal.

"Down flocked the soldiers to the banks,
Till, margined by its pebbles,
One wooded shore was blue with 'Yanks,'
And one was gray with 'Rebels.'

"Then all was still, and then the band,
With movement light and tricksy,
Made stream and forest, hill and strand,
Reverberate with 'Dixie.'

- "The conscious stream with burnished glow
  Went proudly o'er its pebbles,
  But thrilled throughout its deepest flow
  With yelling of the Rebels.
- "Again a pause, and then again
  The trumpets pealed sonorous,
  And 'Yankee Doodle' was the strain
  To which the shore gave chorus.
- "The laughing ripple shoreward flew,
  To kiss the shining pebbles;
  Loud shrieked the swarming Boys in Blue
  Defiance to the Rebels.
- "And yet once more the bugles sang
  Above the stormy riot;
  No shout upon the evening rang—
  There reigned a holy quiet.
- "The sad, slow stream its noiseless flood Poured o'er the glistening pebbles; All silent now the Yankees stood, And silent stood the Rebels.
- "No unresponsive soul had heard
  That plaintive note's appealing,
  So deeply 'Home, Sweet Home' had stirred
  The hidden founts of feeling.
- "Or Blue, or Gray, the soldier sees
  As by the wand of fairy,
  The cottage 'neath the live-oak trees,
  The cabin by the prairie.
- "Or cold, or warm his native skies

  Bend in their beauty o'er him;

  Seen through the tear-mist in his eyes,

  His loved ones stand before him.

"As fades the iris after rain
In April's tearful weather,
The vision vanished, as the strain
And daylight died together.

"But memory, waked by music's art,
Expressed in simplest numbers,
Subdued the sternest Yankee's heart,
Made light the Rebel's slumbers.

"And fair the form of music shines,
That bright, celestial creature,
Who still, 'mid war's embattled lines,
Gave this one touch of nature."

Thompson was more than a litterateur. To adopt the words of the Southern Literary Messenger on his withdrawal from its editorial management, "His sense of the becoming, and his nice regard for the feelings, even for the foibles, of others, marked him as something more than the editor, the poet, or the scholar; they distinguished him as in the best sense of the word, a gentleman." He lies buried in Hollywood Cemetery at Richmond. Both as a man and author he deserved the tribute paid him by Mrs. Margaret J. Preston in her poem entitled A Grave in Hollywood Cemetery:—

 Mrs. Preston.—Whether we consider the amount or the excellence of her work, Mrs. Margaret J. Preston deserves a high rank among the poets of Virginia. She belongs, as some critic has said, to the school of Mrs. Browning; and in range of subject and purity of sentiment she is scarcely inferior to her great English contemporary. First and last she published a half dozen volumes of poetry; and in them all may be found lyrics that reach a high excellence, and make strong appeals to the heart.

Mrs. Preston, the daughter of the Rev. George Junkin, D. D., was born in Philadelphia in 1825. She received her education at home chiefly under the instruction of her father. It is said that she read Latin at ten years of age and Greek at twelve, and that she was accustomed to rise at five o'clock in the morning to read the classics with her father, this early hour being the only time he could spare from his arduous duties. This zeal in the acquisition of knowledge early pointed to a literary career.

In 1848 her father, who had founded Lafayette College, removed to Lexington, Va., to become the president of Washington College. She at once became a contributor to the Southern Literary Messenger. The issue of August, 1849, contains an Apostrophe to Niagara, which exhibits the reflective, religious tone characteristic of her writings. The closing lines of the poem in question are as follows:—

"I tremble as I gaze; and yet my soul
Revives again with this indwelling thought:
That though thy stunning torrent pour itself
In undiminished volume, on and on,
For centuries unsummed, there is a time,
When all that makes thee now so terrible,
(Yet in thy greatest terror, lovely still,)
Shall sink to silence quiet as the grave.
But now I stand upon thy fearful brink
In mute, strange wonder rapt,—I who appear
So evanescent when compared with thee,
Shall rise superior o'er this failing earth,
Whose ruins shall become thy sepulchre."

In 1857 Miss Junkin was married to Prof. J. T. L. Preston, of the Virginia Military Institute. His sister Eleanor was the wife of Col. T. J. Jackson, of the same institution, whose name was afterwards to become famous in the Civil War. Beechenbrook, Mrs. Preston's first volume of poetry, was published in 1865. It was "a rhyme of the war;" and its tender pathos and strong Southern sympathies at once made it popular. It reached its eighth edition within a year. The Song of the Snow, taken from this work, will be found in the preceding chapter.

In 1870 appeared her Old Songs and New, which added to her fame as a poetess. "No American woman," said the New York Evening Post, "has evinced a truer appreciation of what a poet owes to the art of poetry, and the reader will not find in the three hundred pages of this volume one careless line or one trivial thought. There is great variety in the contents of this book. From the most unstudied expression of sensibility to the beautiful in the external world, and to the dramatic presentation of ideals or historic characters, they touch the whole circle of art." Such was the estimate of John R. Thompson who, more than twenty years before, had welcomed the poetess in the Southern Literary Messenger.

Chief among her subsequent publications were Cartoons (1875), For Love's Sake (1886), and Colonial Ballads, Sonnets, and Other Verse (1887). These volumes represent her poetic gifts at their best, and contain not a few pieces of rare excellence. Some of her ballads are characterized by force, dramatic movement, and vivid description. But it is in her meditative and devotional lyrics that she is, perhaps, at her best. Take, for example, the following lines from Cartoons:—

"What will it matter by-and-by,
Whether my path below was bright,
Whether it wound through dark or light,
Under a gray or a golden sky,
When I look back on it, by-and-by?

"What will it matter by-and-by,
Whether unhelped I toiled alone,
Dashing my foot against a stone,
Missing the charge of the angel nigh,
Bidding me think of the by-and-by?

"What will it matter by-and-by,
Whether with dancing Joy I went
Down through the years with a ga, content,
Never believing,—nay, not I,
Tears would be sweeter by-and-by!

"What will it matter? Naught, if I
Only am sure the way I've trod,
Gloomy or gladdened, leads to God,
Questioning not of the how, the why,
If I but reach him, by-and-by."

There are times when such words come to us with peculiar comfort. Or let us take the little song Calling the Angels In, which is found in Colonial Ballads. It gives beautiful expression to the well-meant purpose which most of us are apt to cherish, and which, failing to be carried out, leaves our lives the poorer:—

"We mean to do it. Some day, some day,
We mean to slacken this fevered rush
That is wearing our very souls away,
And grant to our hearts a hush
That is only enough to let them hear
The footsteps of angels drawing near.

"We mean to do it. Oh, never doubt,
When the burden of day-time broil is o'er,
We'll sit and muse while the stars come out,
As the patriarchs sat in the door
Of their tents with a heavenward-gazing eye,
To watch for the angels passing by.

"We've seen them afar at high noontide,
When fiercely the world's hot flashings beat;
Yet never have bidden them turn aside,
To tarry in converse sweet;
Nor prayed them to hallow the cheer we spread,
To drink of our wine and break our bread.

"We promise our hearts that when the stress
Of the life-work reaches the longed-for close,
When the weight that we groan with hinders less,
We'll welcome such calm repose
As banishes care's disturbing din,
And then—we'll call the angels in.

"The day we dreamed of comes at length,
When, tired of every mocking guest,
And broken in spirit and shorn of strength,
We drop at the door of rest,
And wait and watch as the day wanes on—
But—the angels we meant to call—are gone."

In the volumes before us there is much more that is worthy of mention and quotation. Our authoress owned a harp of many strings; if her sweetest tones are those of a refined religious feeling, she is scarcely less happy in describing the beauties of nature or narrating some thrilling incident. Though she wrote much, she never forgot the claims of art, and her poems have a technical finish that is in keeping with the refinement of their thought and sentiment. It is safe to say that she easily stands at the head of our female singers.

Virginia Lucas.—In 1869 there appeared in Baltimore a volume entitled *The Wreath of Eglantine and Other Poems*, edited and in part composed by Daniel Bedinger Lucas. The first part of the book consists of poems written by the editor's sister, Miss Virginia Lucas, who wrote under the *nom de plume* of "Eglantine." In the introduction the editor says: "Of the three stages

of poetic life, undoubtedly the first is the disposition to write verse; there is then achieved a knowledge of what poetry is, before the third and final epoch of power and production. It seems to me, in composing the earlier and later pieces of 'Eglantine,' that she had attained to a knowledge of what constitutes poetry, as distinguished from the mere spontaneous and uncultivated outflow of poetic emotion, and that, at her death, on the threshold of her twenty-seventh year, she was treading closely upon the enchanted domain, to breathe whose atmosphere is inspiration indeed, and where all things of beauty and harmony supply the ambrosia which nourishes the soul of the genuine poet.

"But whether she would have attained the power of the poet or not, 'Eglantine' was endowed, as all who knew her will testify, with his rare susceptibility to the charms of nature. Flowers were to her companions and interpreters; with them she conversed, and seemed almost in them to renew her own being; her fancy would recall the exact shades of coloring, the dentations and involutes of almost every wild flower which adorns her own beautiful, native Shenandoah Valley."

The justice of these remarks, which a brother's affection has not distorted, leaves little more to be done than to offer illustrations of "Eglantine's" gifts and achievements. Almost every one of her poems finds its subject in nature. In Summer Night the sights, sounds, and subduing effects of that entrancing time are graphically presented:—

"But calmly on, and lovely still,
Yon pale orb floats from star to star,
And pensive cries the whippoorwill,
And barks the watch-dog from afar.
Musing, with fresh emotions fraught,
I own the soul-subduing power,
Sacred to sleep and silent thought,
O sweet and melancholy hour."

In The Cottage by the Mill her thoughts tenderly and sadly wander back to her childhood's home, which has since passed into the hands of strangers:—

"Now the meadow is gay with the buttercup's gold,
And the green willow bends to the breeze as of old;
The mill is still standing, the cot is still there,
The rose is still blooming as fragrant and fair;
And the lilac bush waving dispenses perfume—
But the hand of another now gathers the bloom;
And the face of a stranger looks out from the sill
Of the neat, white-washed cottage that stands by the mill."

Indian Summer is a careful study of that brief season—strangely beautiful in the Valley of Virginia—when the rich colorings of the autumn time are softened by a far-off, dreamy haze:—

"The far-off mountain tops, agleam with rosy light,
While shadows lie between of softest blue,
Are changing with the day's departing beams: their height
Now glows in purple splendor; now its hue
Still takes a deeper dye, as gum with maple blends,
While poplars intertwine their golden boughs;
And many a silver-sparkling streamlet softly wends
His rimpling pathway where the linden grows."

These brief extracts are sufficient to show that in the early death of Miss Lucas, Virginia poetry suffered an inestimable loss. Nowhere else, perhaps, do we find a more delicate appreciation of the varied charms of nature, or a more exquisite art in setting them to the music of verse.

Daniel Bedinger Lucas.—The life of Daniel Bedinger Lucas has been one of rich and varied experience. He was born in Charles Town, W. Va., in 1836. He studied at the University

of Virginia, entered the legal profession, and afterwards as legislator, United States senator, and president of the Supreme Court of West Virginia, he has stood in the main currents of the great movements of the past fifty years. But the exacting demands of his large and busy career have not turned him entirely from the delights of literature, for which his versatile and superior gifts have bestowed upon him an especial affinity.

In The Wreath of Eglantine, to which reference was made in the preceding sketch, he published a number of poems of his own composition, which make up the second part of the book. His verse is characterized by vigorous thought and expression. But he was too intent on bodying forth his abundant store of thought and sentiment to indulge in an overwrought or obtrusive refinement of art. At the same time there is the literary skill of a scholarly mind and well-disciplined pen.

It is an old observation that sorrow frequently finds voice in song. In the volume before us there is a threnody entitled *Eglantine*, a tender lamentation over the early death of the poet's sister:—

"Sing, O saddest bird of evening!
Ever mournful whippoorwill;
Gone from me are dreams Elysian,
Grief alone my breast can fill;
Sweeter than all joy, and dearer,
Tender tears to me have been,
Tears of wildest melancholy
Rained o'er thee, my Eglantine."

Calidia is a sigh for the rapture which young love—only once in a life-time—brings to the soul:—

"Nay, Time! thou canst never restore me
The rapture which crowned me a king,
When bright, like a vision before me,
Rose a maid, as an idolized thing,
All flush with the blush of her Spring."

The Battle of Ball's Bluff is a strong martial lyric, filled with a warm Confederate ardor:—

"Thicker, faster still, the deadly volleys fell,
Dark'ning the air at dawn of day;
And wild there rose above the din the Southron's yell,
As the black clouds rolled away,
Along the trembling shore."

Our poet's patriotic and national songs are the deep outbreathings of a thoughtful, ardent soul. The best known of all these pieces is *The Land Where We Were Dreaming*, which is a poetic presentation of history and a heart-thrilling prophecy, long since happily fulfilled. The poem was written in 1865:—

"Fair were our nation's visions, and as grand
As ever floated out of fancy-land;
Children were we in simple faith,
But god-like children, whom nor death,
Nor threat of danger drove from honor's path—
In the land where we were dreaming!

"Proud were our men as pride of birth could render,
As violets our women pure and tender;
And when they spoke, their voice's thrill
At evening hushed the whippoorwill,
At morn the mocking-bird was mute and still,
In the land where we were dreaming!

"And we had graves that covered more of glory,
Than ever taxed the lips of ancient story;
And in our dream we wove the thread
Of principles for which we bled,
And suffered long our own immortal dead,
In the land where we were dreaming!

"Tho' in our land we had both bond and free,
Both were content, and so God let them be;
Till Northern glances, slanting down,
With envy viewed our harvest sun—
But little recked we, for we still slept on,
In the land where we were dreaming!

"Our sleep grew troubled, and our dreams grew wild;
Red meteors flashed across our heaven's field;
Crimson the moon; between the Twins
Barbed arrows flew in circling lanes
Of light; red comets tossed their flery manes
O'er the land where we were dreaming!

"Down from her eagle height smiled Liberty,
And waved her hand in sign of victory;
The world approved, and everywhere,
Except where growled the Russian bear,
The brave, the good and just gave us their prayer,
For the land where we were dreaming.

"High o'er our heads a starry flag was seen,
Whose field was blanched, and spotless in its sheen;
Chivalry's cross its union bears,
And by his scars each veteran swears
To bear it on in triumph through the wars,
In the land where we were dreaming.

"We fondly thought a government was ours—
We challenged place among the world's great powers;
We talked in sleep of rank, commission,
Until so life-like grew the vision,
That he who dared to doubt but met derision,
In the land where we were dreaming.

A figure came among us as we slept—
At first he knelt, then slowly rose and wept;
Then gathering up a thousand spears,
He swept across the field of Mars,
Then bowed farewell, and walked behind the stars,
From the land where we were dreaming.

"We looked again, another figure still Gave hope, and nerved each individual will; Erect he stood, as clothed with power; Self-poised, he seemed to rule the hour, With firm, majestic sway,—of strength a tower, In the land where we were dreaming.

- "As while great Jove, in bronze, a warden good,
  Gazed eastward from the Forum where he stood,
  Rome felt herself secure and free,—
  So Richmond, we, on guard for thee,
  Beheld a bronzed hero, god-like Lee,
  In the land where we were dreaming.
- "As wakes the soldier when the alarum calls,—
  As wakes the mother when her infant falls,—
  As starts the traveler when around
  His sleepy couch the fire-bells sound,—
  So woke our nation with a single bound—
  In the land where we were dreaming!
- "Woe, woe is us! the startled mothers cried,
  While we have slept, our noble sons have died!
  Woe, woe is us! how strange and sad,
  That all our glorious visions fled,
  Have left us nothing real but our dead,
  In the land where we were dreaming!
- "Are they really dead, our martyred slain?

  No, dreamers! Morn shall bid them rise again;

  From every plain, from every height,—

  On which they seemed to die for right,

  Their gallant spirits shall renew the fight,

  In the land where we were dreaming!
- "Unconquered still in soul, tho' now o'er-run,
  In peace, in war, the battle's just begun!
  Once this Thyestean banquet o'er,
  Grown strong the few who bide their hour,
  Shall rise and hurl its drunken guests from power,
  In the land where we were deaming!"

With this remarkable production, voicing at the beginning of the Reconstruction era the sentiment both of a Confederate soldier and a philosophic student of history, we may well conclude our study of the period of the Civil War. Henceforth, with rare exceptions, we shall breathe the freer atmosphere of a more spacious and prosperous time.

## SECOND NATIONAL PERIOD

(1870-1907)

## CHAPTER XIV

## Poets from 1870 to 1880

The second national period, in which we are now living, will probably be terminated at some time during the present century. The present time is regarded by many thoughtful persons as a period of transition. It is felt that in some measure the old order is changing, and that important political and social transformations are to be expected. But what is to follow as the result of influences now at work cannot be clearly discerned. We can only hope that whatever changes may come will be in the line of human progress, and result in greater freedom, intelligence, and goodness.

During the present period the conditions have been generally favorable to literature. Virginia at length recovered from the effects of the Civil War, and has come to share in the general and marvelous development and prosperity of our country. Agriculture, mining, and manufacture have received a new impetus; railroads have been built in all directions; towns and cities, pulsating with a vigorous life, have sprung up in different parts of the State. The people of Virginia feel the uplifting power of a new courage and hope.

Intellectual culture has kept pace with this material progress. Never before was there so great an interest in education. The ideas of Jefferson, after a century's delay, are being realized, and public schools are now brought within reach of all the children of the State. Our colleges and universities are

attended by a larger number of students than ever before. The result of all this educational activity is seen in a higher and more widely diffused intelligence.

Among the great intellectual forces at work in Virginia, as in other parts of our country, is the periodical press—that capable and insistent teacher of current universal history. Every city now has its daily paper which, looking beyond merely local interests, supplies its readers with the general news of the world. Though we have no great literary periodical, corresponding to the Southern Literary Messenger in its day, the popular magazines, published in other parts of the country, find access to almost every home. In this way Virginia has entered upon a broader intellectual life; and laying aside what some have regarded as its provincial character, it has assumed a cosmopolitan range of thought and sentiment.

What has been said of Virginia is true, to a greater or less extent, of the whole South. With the new era upon which this part of our country has entered, there has come an increased literary activity. Among the popular writers of today, not a few are from the region south of the Potomac. The names of Thomas Nelson Page, Miss Mary Johnston, Charles Egbert Craddock, Grace King, Joel Chandler Harris, and others will readily occur to every one. If the dominant form of literature is prose, there are still a few singers whose inspiration and music triumph over the tumult of commerce and manufacture. In the pages that follow we shall have an opportunity to do some of them honor.

Rev. Henry Wall.—In 1870 there appeared in Richmond a humorous and satirical poem called *Fashion*. It is a pamphlet of twenty-two pages, written by the Rev. Henry Wall, rector of St. John's Church, in that city. The poem, which is divided into two parts, takes off the vagaries and follies of fashion.

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The humor takes away the sting of the satire; in place of anger, the verse provokes a smile. The author was a close and shrewd observer; and jackets, bonnets, Grecian bends, tight trousers, and other similar topics, all are summoned in turn before the bar of common sense. Here is the manner in which the poet touches up the diminutive bonnet then in vogue:—

"But nowadays the thing they wear
Upon their own, or others' hair,
Would neither save from rain nor snows,
Nor any blast of wind that blows.
In short, without consulting books,
To unaccustomed eyes it looks
A bunch of ribbons, a rose or two,
And there's the bonnet, red or blue,
Or drab, or yellow, or pink, or green."

As was perfectly proper, considering his clerical station, the author ends his satire with a saving homiletic flavor. If the devotees of fashion would use some of the money wasted in extravagant dress in doing deeds of charity,—

"Then as you'd pass along the public ways,
The children of distress would sound your praise—
No heartless belle, nor empty-headed beau
Whose sole renown consists in outward show,
But one who tends the culture more refined
Of love to God and love to human kind."

Henry T. Stanton.—Henry Thompson Stanton, who was born in 1834, was an officer in the United States army and Indian Commissioner. During the intervals of his busy life, he occasionally gave himself to poetry, in which we find mingled humor and pathos. His best known poem is The Moneyless Man, which first appeared in 1855. His first volume was published in Baltimore in 1871 under the title Moneyless Man and Other Poems.

In this volume A Pipe After Tea is a tender record of a long and happy wedded life:—

"And here we sit, on this winter night,
A cozy and happy old pair,
And loving as true
As we used to do
When I was young and you were fair,
And the silver thread from the loom of years
Came not in your raven hair."

Types of Life is a sad meditation on the brevity and vanity of human existence. It varies somewhat the olden simile of the fading grass and withering flower:—

"I saw a star fall from its home
In heaven's blue and boundless dome,
To gleam no more;
I saw a wave with snowy crest
Thrown from the ocean's stormy breast
Upon the shore.

"And these are types of human lives;
Man lives a little while and thrives,
But withers fast.
He sees a thousand lovely gleams,
But wastes his life away in dreams,
And falls at last."

In Sixty-five there is a burning reproof of the passion and wrong that followed after the war. Our author's sympathies went out to the suffering South; he pleaded for mercy toward the conquered. With the moral earnestness of a Lowell he proclaims the truth that in spite of "palaces and monumental piles"—

"Still without the seal of virtue on the charter of your state, In the eyes of Christian people you are neither good nor great; In the eyes of God Almighty you are only great in sin, And He'll weigh you in the autumn when his angels garner in."

The Faith She Plighted Me is a record of tragic disappointment. It is founded, as the author tells us, on an actual occurrence. But "the unfortunate gentleman, however, still lives, having fairly forgotten his disappointment in the possession of a new love." The hero of the poem, standing by the fair form of his love in the flush of evening, had pleadingly asked her not to forget her plighted faith when he was beyond the sea:—

"Then came her full heart from her eyes,
Turned liquidly to mine—
'Did Eve forget her Paradise
Beneath another vine?
No, no,' she said, 'the waves may fling
Their whiteness on the sea,
Nor time, nor tide, nor death shall bring
Forgetfulness to me.'"

After a long absence amidst the flowers of Italy, the fruits of France, and the thrift of Germany, the lover returns to find the plighted faith broken:—

"You mark the pale, proud woman there,
Beneath the astral shine;
Despite such blossoms in her hair,
Her heart should pulse to mine;
I brought the sunset back to-night
From far beyond the sea;
I dared not think she held so light
The faith she plighted me!

"I clutched the goblet as a vise,
And pledged her thus in wine:
'May Eve forget her Paradise
Beneath another vine!'

And then I said, 'the waves may fling
Their whiteness on the sea,
Nor time, nor tide, nor death shall bring
Forgetfulness to me!'"

It is, perhaps, worth while to reproduce in full *The Money-less Man*. There are many who think that the social conditions portrayed in the poem fifty years ago, have not been yet entirely reformed!

- "Is there no secret place on the face of the earth,
  Where charity dwelleth, where virtue has birth?
  Where bosoms in mercy and kindness will heave,
  When the poor and the wretched shall ask and receive?
  Is there no place at all, where a knock from the poor,
  Will bring a kind angel to open the door?
  Ah, search the wide world wherever you can,
  There is no open door for a Moneyless Man!
- "Go look in yon hall where the chandelier's light
  Drives off with its splendor the darkness of night,
  Where the rich-hanging velvet in shadowy fold
  Sweeps gracefully down with its trimmings of gold,
  And the mirrors of silver take up, and renew,
  In long-lighted vistas, the 'wildering view:
  Go there! at the banquet, and find, if you can,
  A welcoming smile for a Moneyless Man!
- "Go, look in yon church of the cloud-reaching spire, Which gives to the sun his same look of red fire, Where the columns and arches are gorgeous within, And the walls seem as pure as a soul without sin; Walk down the long aisles, see the rich and the great In the pomp and the pride of their wordly estate; Walk down in your patches, and find, if you can, Who opens a pew to a Moneyless Man.
- "Go look in the banks, where Mammon has told His hundreds and thousands of silver and gold; Where, safe from the hands of the starving and poor, Lies pile upon pile of the glittering ore!

Walk up to their counters—ah, there you may stay Till your limbs grow old, till your hairs grow gray, And you'll find at the banks not one of the clan With money to lend to a Moneyless Man!

- "Go, look to yon judge, in his dark-flowing gown, With scales wherein law weigheth equity down; Where he frowns on the weak and smiles on the strong, And punishes right whilst he justifies wrong; Where juries their lips to the Bible have laid, To render a verdict—they've already made: Go there, in the court-room, and find, if you can, Any law for the cause of the Moneyless Man!
- "Then go to your hovel—no raven has fed
  The wife who has suffered too long for her bread;
  Kneel down by her pallet, and kiss the death frost
  From the lips of the angel your poverty lost:
  Then turn in your agony upward to God,
  And bless, while it smites you, the chastening rod;
  And you'll find, at the end of your life's little span,
  There's a welcome above for a Moneyless Man!"

Joseph Salyards.—Joseph Salyards, a native of Rockingham County, was born in a cabin. In his earlier years he had a hard struggle with poverty; but his desire for knowledge triumphed over all difficulties, and in the course of time he became one of the ablest and best known teachers of the Valley of Virginia. It is estimated that more than a thousand students felt the uplifting power of his strong personality and his abounding scholarship.

But little is known of his father, who disappeared in a campaign against the Indians. His mother, whose maiden name was Edwards, was descended from a noble family that traced its ancestry back to King Edward VI. This strain of noble English blood inspired the poet with a deep affection for the mother country—an affection that found beautiful expression

in a stanza of *Idothea*, an elaborate didactic poem presently to be noticed:—

"Dear Old England, ever leading
Onward through the files of Fate,
Foremost where the brave are bleeding,
Foremost where the wise debate;
Mistress of the willing sea,
Mother of the nations free,
Friend of genius, learning, art,
Honest friend of honest heart;
Source of social elevation,
Schemes of wide benevolence,
Pioneer of every nation
Up the steeps of Providence."

Professor Salyards was for many years the head of the Polytechnic Institute at New Market. Apart from his routine work he remained an indefatigable student and writer. He familiarized himself with no fewer than eight ancient and modern languages, and became master of a vigorous prose style. His principal literary work, however, was *Idothea*, published in 1874. It is a moral epic, and engaged his attention for forty years. In this particular it reminds us of the slow elaboration of Goethe's *Faust*; and like the famous German poem, the great length of time devoted to its composition prevented uniformity in style and treatment.

It is not easy to give a correct and satisfactory estimate of *Idothea*. The prevailing measure is iambic pentameter in rhyming couplets—a form that in its easy flow recalls the masterful lines of Pope. But there are also rapid tetrameter lines and various lyric measures, all of which exhibit scholarly attainments and artistic skill. There is abundant learning and profound thought; but there is obscurity in the general purpose of the poem, and a lack of cohesive unity in its several parts. It would not have been easy reading in the palmiest days of

moral epics; and in this prosaic, commercial age, when even brief lyrics are apt to be skipped over lightly, there are few readers so heroically devoted to poetry as to master its thoughtand message.

The design of the poem is explained by Mr. Elon O. Henkel, a former student and great admirer of the poet, as follows: "The universal history of both rudely barbaric and of highly civilized mankind discloses a knowledge of a Divine Being. To account for the origin of this idea and enforce its presence as coincident with the consciousness of good and evil, constitute the ground-work of the poem. The three great departments of the universe, the intellectual, the moral, and the spiritual, are boldly encompassed. Two leading characters, known as Idothea and Erasmus, constitute the heroine and hero of the poem—with a few other appropriate characters. Truth, a divine attribute, disguised under the form of Idothea, impersonates the moral world, whilst Erasmus dominates the intellectual."

The epic is divided into three parts: The first has as its theme the beauty of truth as found in man, in nature, and in revelation. The second part, which is made up of nine idyls, is entitled Good and Evil. The third part is called Yonder, or the Beauty of Holiness. In the last two parts lyric measures are the prevailing type; and though the separate idyls rise far above the commorplace in thought and expression, they fall short of that felicity which might baptize them with immortality.

It might be a question whether the poet's learning was not in some degree an impediment to his imaginative flight. He scarcely seems to have ascended to that serene altitude, at which learning is transmuted into unconscious culture and power. The poem, apart from its title, contains a diction that is frequently not English. Such words as "idos," "uranothen," "kalonimota," are inexcusable importations, and apparently

serve no other purpose than to make the unlearned gasp and stare. There is nothing in the poem that might not have been told in plain English; and it is always a melancholy spectacle to see a real scholar unable to cast the shell of pedantry.

It only remains to give a passage or two in illustration of the author's style. This earth of ours is a part of the celestial universe, and in its sublime movements is bearing us through the heavens:—

"A stranger here, unconscious how, or why,
I walk the earth; I circle round the sky!
Fair mother Earth, why deem our dust below?
Thou too art heaven, if yonder worlds are so:
In heaven I worship, though a wandering mite;
Though clay, I breathe; though dust, I see the light!
A conscious atom on thy shining breast,
I too have been the universal guest."

Like Wordsworth, our poet maintains that nature, not the wayward, contradictory lives of men, is the great teacher:—

"Away! away! I see no form divine.

Truth, beauty lives, but man is not the shrine;

To mountains high, to oceans deep I go,

To brooks that murmur, to the winds that blow.

The rocks beneath, the stars that roll above,

May teach me beauty, teach me truth and love;

Adieu the glory and the gates of men!

The rainbow rests upon the mountain glen!"

A single passage from the song of a true-hearted maiden will show our author's lyric skill at its best:—

"I'll weave a wreath of bright hues three,
For the brow of my charming youth,
And say, you must wear it, my love, for me,
This garland of love and truth.

For as its beauty and perfume
Are shed for thee alone,
Thy true Lorraine, and her youthful bloom,
While they last, shall be thine own,
My love;
While they last, shall be thine own.

"But as its sweets, so fragrant now,

Must soon be sighed away,

Its leaves upon thy happy brow

Soon wither and decay,

These charms you love must wither too,

This heart lie cold and lone;

But thou wilt know, oh! deep and true,

They once were all thine own,

My love;

They once were all thine own "

They once were all thine own."

The poet passed away August 10, 1885—a man "who in life was revered and in death lamented."

James DeR. Blackwell.—"The Poetical Works of James DeRuyter Blackwell were published in New York in 1879 in three volumes. This large collection is made up of short poems, mostly in metres which our hymn-books have made familiar. The author has some metrical skill, and can weave a commonplace thought into good average rhyme. But we look in vain for lofty flights of poetic fancy and poetic power.

When I Am Gone expresses the melancholy reflections that sometimes come to the most of us. The sun will shine as brightly, and the birds will sing as sweetly; and, after a brief period, like the legions that have gone before us, we shall be forgotten:—

"Alas! how soon is man forgot
Who once from earth has passed away!
It seems that time's erasive blot
Falls on him ere his corpse decay.

"It seems as if the closing tomb,
Which darkly hides him from the view,
Within its deep and caverned gloom
Hath power to clasp his memory too."

The brief poem, Dwell Not on Departed Joys, commends a course that many will be slow to accept. We are not willing that the blissful moments of the past should be utterly submerged in oblivion. Though the vase be shattered, "the scent of the roses clings round it still." But let us hear the poet:—

"Oh, dwell not on departed joys!
They have forever fled;
Oh, let them in oblivion rest,
With the forgotten dead.

"For if we would past joys recall
To memory again,
Unbidden with them will return
Too well remembered pain.

"Alas! each smile of happiness
Was followed soon by tears;
Then let them both together sleep
Within the grave of years."

In *Evening* the author rises as near true poetry as in anything else he has written:—

"Morning is lovely! but sweeter far
When eve o'er nature spreads her mantle gray;
When from the deep cerulean depths her star
Beams on our vision with its calming ray.

"Day is for labor; but eve bringeth rest,
And o'er the earth her tranquil twilight throws;
The bird returns in gladness to her nest,
The beast o'er-wearied sinks into repose."

A number of the poems are personal, and several celebrate the glories and beauties of his native State.

Rev. Joel Swartz.—The Rev. Joel Swartz, preacher, lecturer, and poet, was born in Shenandoah County, Va., in 1827. He was educated in Capital University, Columbus, Ohio; and after his ordination to the Lutheran ministry, he served congregations in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Harrisburg, and elsewhere. But in all his migrations and professional labors, he has constantly harkened to the call of the poetic muse.

In 1879 he published a volume of poetry entitled *Dreamings* of the Waking Heart, and in 1901 a second volume of two hundred and thirty-nine pages with the simple title *Poems*. The broad culture of Dr. Swartz has made him at home in many fields; and in his volumes we find poems of nature, meditations on the deeper aspects of life, pictures of beautiful homelife, and varied musings for quiet hours. He has been a strong and aggressive advocate of temperance, and his ardor in this cause naturally finds expression in some vigorous lyrics.

To Dr. Swartz the poet is a seer, whose finer sensibilities enable him to read in nature and history and the human heart the truths of God. In the first poem called *The Poet-Seer* we read:—

"The poet, with a keener ear,
In solitudes of thought apart,
Can hear the pulses, far and near,
In earth and sea and atmosphere,
Of Nature's never resting heart.

"And his own heart, like those fine strings,
Across the wind-harp's bosom drawn,
Can turn to song the unheard things
Which come and go on airy wings,
More lightly than the tread of dawn."

This will be recognized as no ordinary writing. There is a firm mastery of thought and form. But it may be said that the intellect rather than the fancy dominates our poet's singing. He does not write what is bizarre, or mystical, or far-fetched; there is clear thought pervading his poetry, and sometimes the opening line reads like a thesis or proposition to be demonstrated or discussed. If this fact at times makes his verse a little prosaic, it always renders it substantial.

A profound moral and religious feeling runs through our author's poetry. Many of the themes are suggested by Scripture texts; and the poems thus become a sort of versified homily. This is a dangerous process, for only high poetic gifts and rare felicity of thought and expression can prevent a prosaic effect. In this difficult task he has sometimes succeeded admirably. Soul Solitariness, for example, is based on Prov. 14:10—"The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." It begins—

"All souls must chiefly dwell alone
Whoever may be near;
We hold a chamber all our own,
Which but to us and God is known,
Where none may interfere."

The poet, with advancing years, has a deep sense of the responsibility of life and its mysteries. He questions What Is Man? and asks Whom Shall We Crown? He feels the presence of that "divinity that shapes our ends." In The Larger Plan, he says:—

"If, in my youth, my heart proposed
Which way my steps should tend,
I've found, in truth, a will disposed
The journey and the end.

"Man's way, I find, is not in man,
To order and control;
There lies above his partial plan
A larger, grander whole."

There is, in our author's poetry, a wholesome attitude toward life. There have been trials, but unlike Job, he blesses the day that he was born. He still enjoys "life's cup of cheer," but with the chastened soberness of age. Yet, like so many others, he would not live life over again; and so he says in My Birthday at Three Score and Ten and Four,—

"But would I live my life again?
And would I, if I could, recall
My childhood, manhood, all in all—
Without their tears, without their pain—
Retrace the steps that I have gone?
No! life is better further on."

#### CHAPTER XV

### Poets of 1880 and 1881

The year 1880 was a phenomenal one for poetry in Virginia. No fewer than five volumes, if we include that of Father Ryan, were published by poets of the Old Dominion. Several of them are worthy of extended consideration.

Charles W. Cooper.—Not much, however, can be said of *The Musings of Myron* by Charles W. Cooper. The author was a migratory school-teacher, whose attainments in English, notwithstanding his vocation, were evidently limited. The intricacies of our irregular verbs, it is to be feared, always remained a partially unsolved problem for him.

But it is to his credit that he had only a humble opinion of his verse, most of which was produced in ante-bellum days. "I then had a fondness," he says pathetically, "a predilection for the muses. Not long after these poor effusions were produced, I started on the sober journey of life; and I must say that the stern realities through which I have passed since then have furnished but little fuel to the kindling of poetic fire. Though conscious of the many and varied defects of these productions, they are nevertheless given to the public."

The author of *The Musings* was a Confederate soldier. There is a reminiscence of his service in the army in the *Dream of the Chancellorsville Soldier*. He says that he was not influenced in its composition by Campbell's well-known poem, *The Soldier's Dream*, and certainly the excellence of the Scotchman's production is not reproduced. The opening stanzas are given as a specimen of *Myron's* work at its best:—

"How many brave comrades fell near me that day,
My heart is sore pained, as memory recalls;

'Twas a harvest of death, no one could portray:
The charge of the valiant, the whizzing of balls.

"But the scenes of the day now passed from my sight,

The blood and the carnage no more could I see;
But the mind wandered on, and I dreamed in the night

Of my newly made bride,—gay, sportive, and free."

The principal poem in the volume in hand is *The Pilgrimage*, which records an imaginary journey to the Old World. The Orient, England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and Italy, are visited in succession, and some of their historic scenes and characters are brought before us. Had the execution of the poem equaled the boldness of the plan, it might have called for further notice. *The Natural Bridge* commemorates a visit there in 1872; but it can hardly be said that the poem gives adequate expression to the sublime emotions awakened by that stupendous work of nature.

Not long after the publication of this volume, Mr. Cooper entered the Soldiers' Home at Richmond, where he died several years later.

Edward S. Gregory.—Edward S. Gregory was born in Lynchburg in 1843. He early showed a fondness for books; but the war called him in 1861 from his studies. He saw military service in Virginia and Mississippi, surrendering with Pemberton at Vicksburg. After the war, he was connected with several Virginia papers, and from 1871 to 1877 he edited the Petersburg Index-Appeal with ability and success. He then gave up journalism for the Christian ministry, and was ordained priest in the Episcopal Church in 1881. Death interrupted his useful life three years later.

In 1880 he published in Lynchburg a volume of verse called

Bonniebell and Other Poems. The title poem is a poetic romance of nearly fifty pages, the moral of which is that a woman's love will in the end triumph over her desire to lead an independent life. Here is the opening stanza describing the heroine:—

"Such sweetness and such stateliness in Bonniebell were mingled, Her gentleness so full of charm—her pride so high was seen, That if, in her submissive mood, my young blood lit and tingled, As oft I saw, with sinking heart, she took the crown of queen."

The song called *Renunciation* in this romance, which gives expression to the hero's sad self-surrender in his despair, reaches a height scarcely found elsewhere in our author's verse. It is worthy of reproduction here in full:—

"Dear heart, I win thee and thy love in losing,
And therein find my own true self at last;
For me remains not any place of choosing,
Nor any room for taking or refusing;
And all bright hope is buried in the past.

"Best heart, though now I know thee past the winning,
And now no more may love aspire to gain;
Through all the past of suffering and sinning,
And aimless effort and of vain beginning,
I see thy figure shining, without pain.

"Noblest and purest, now know I 'tis better
That what I fondly dreamed should never be;
Love's spirit is more glorious than love's letter,
And thine hath blest me fully, without fetter,
And I possess thee all, yet leave thee free!"

"Farewell, and yet I leave not, nor shall leave thee,
And where thou art my better self shall bide;
My self, unselfish now, shall so receive thee,
That neither change may shame nor absence grieve thee;
So shalt thou dwell forever at my side."

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It is needless to say that the ending of the romance was not in fulfilment of this pathetic self-renunciation. At the proper moment "a radiant rosebud," which was to be the happy sign of his acceptance, burned half hidden in the warm braids of her hair.

The volume under consideration contains "a book of sonnets," nearly forty in number. This difficult form of verse imposed a restraint that was helpful in our author's tendency to diffuseness, and taken all together, the sonnets may be regarded, perhaps, as his most artistic work. Most of them, as a prefatory note informs us, were composed during the Civil War; but only two or three deal with martial themes. The sonnet De Profundis is given:—

"Out of the depths my cry ascends to Thee—Save or I perish! I have smote in vain
The waves that compass me about, and gain
Upon me in the darkness on the sea.

"Long since the last light died away: I flee
From roaring seas that do my soul affright,
Yet know not where mine anchorage may be,
And steer all starless through the storm and night.

"My heart not yet despairs of succor quite;
Since Thou canst still the waters, and supply
New strength, fresh hope, a sure and steady light,
And havens where the mariner may hie,
And find in Thee such warmth, and light, and life,
As quite repay his heart for all its pain and strife."

Under the division of miscellaneous poems, which constitute the third part of the book, we meet with such themes as The Southern Heart, Love's Light, The Sword of Lee, The Brook's Voice, and many others of a similar kind. Heart's Ease is a brief lyric of merit:—

"How sweet is the breath of even,
With sudden dash of the rain;
How blest is the balm of heaven
On brow and brain!

"O heart that was hoar and ashen,
And fevered with many fears,
How softered thy pang and passion
In rain of tears!"

In 1883, Mr. Gregory published a second volume under the title Lenore and Other Poems. This work is made up of original poems and translations, for the author was familiar with Latin, French, and German. The title poem is a rendering of Bürger's famous ballad. It is introduced by a sketch of the German poet and a brief account of other translations, nearly a dozen in number. The best known of these versions is that of Sir Walter Scott, though it is not the most faithful to the original. A comparison with the original shows that our author's version retains the metre and rhyme of the German. It is an excellent piece of work, and deserves to rank with the very best translations that have been made of the ghostly ballad. Only the opening stanza can be given:—

"Lenore from dark and dreary dreams
Awakes as morn is burning;
'Love, hast thou died, or changed, she cried,
'So long thou art returning?'
He was with royal Frederick's arms,
Engaged in bloody Prague's alarms;
Yet had no word nor token
The soldier's safety spoken."

The Roman Lawyer in Jerusalem is a delightful poem in blank verse. It shows the influence of Browning, though the poem is a sequel and reply to a poem of the same title published by William Wetmore Story in Blackwood's Magazine in 1870. A prose introduction acquaints us with the circumstances under which it was written. Mr. Story's poem argues "that Judas, believing the Christus to be God, impatient at the delay in His vindication as such, . . was led by a hot and impulsive temper into thrusting the issue of an open claim and proof of Godhead upon his Master, in the firm faith of witnessing a glorious and triumphant conclusion."

It is the purpose of Mr. Gregory's poem to controvert this old and fanciful notion, and to vindicate the popular belief in the treachery of Judas. It recounts in graphic style the closing scenes of our Savior's life. The remorse of Judas is taken as proof of his base treachery. Peter had sinned and been forgiven:—

"And so might Judas have come back, except He knew his deed was treason, and he died While yet the whirlwind of remorse obscured The star of Heavenly pardon. So he passed To his own place, destroyer, self-destroyed."

Miss Marr.—Miss Fannie H. Marr, of Warrenton, Va., has two volumes of poetry to her credit. The first, called Heart-Life in Song, was published in Richmond in 1880; the other, entitled Virginia and Other Poems, was brought out the following year in Philadelphia. These volumes deal with plain, homely themes, as may be judged from such titles as Old Letters, Family Portraits, To My Books, Summer Evening. They show a good degree of poetic feeling and literary skill; and if there is a tendency to diffuseness, we always find a pure and gentle spirit.

In the preface of one of the volumes we read the sources from which she drew inspiration:—

"For I have not sought in volumes
Dim and musty with old age,
And as quaint as ancient fashions,
Themes and stories for my page;
I have only tried to gather,
As in lavish waste they lay,
Thoughts and lessons lightly pictured
On the fresh leaves of to-day."

A religious sentiment is dominant with nothing of the doubts and vagaries of modern scepticism. In a time of theological unrest and innovating beliefs, she preferred to follow the old paths:—

"For I love the old, worn pathways
That I know are tried and true;
Our own dead have passed along them
To the temple wide and new.
Other teachings upward leading,
Other pathways there may be;
But the faith our fathers died in
Is the only faith for me."

In A Simile the poetess gives expression to Augustine's thought that the human soul was made for God, and is never entirely at peace till it finds Him:—

"The restless water strives
And struggles in its course;
Its single, constant aim to reach
The level of its source.

"And so the fettered soul,
Through mist, and film, and clod,
Is ever striving to attain
Its source and fountain—God."

The title poem of the second volume was inspired by a tender, patriotic love; and perhaps nowhere else have the glories of Virginia been more fully and successfully sung. It is divided into eight brief parts, the second of which begins with this apostrophe:—

"Virginia, queen and princess of the States,
The friend of freedom, and oppression's foe;
Virginia, on whose footsteps Honor waits,
Virginia, great alike in weal and woe,
What splendors, like a halo, round thee gleam,
What grandeur dwells within thy very name!"

In Life the author reaches as high a strain as in any other of her pieces. She believes in the worth and dignity of life, and "the boon of immortality."

"Strip life of its externals; lay it bare
Of honor, wealth, and comfort; yet if free
From crime's polluting touch, it still is fair,—
Aye more,—'tis great and glorious to be.
With lips of dust to draw the kingly breath,
Whose source and fountain is eternity;
And, sheathed in mail impregnable to death,
As God, and angels, and just men,—to be.

"O mortal, where and whatsoe'er thou art,
Outcast and banned, this yet remains to thee;
Lift up thy drooping head, and let thine heart
Rejoice in that thou art—rejoice to be!
O peer and mate of angels, even now
A radiant light on thy lone path doth shine;
A crown of glory rests upon thy brow,—
The boon of immortality is thine!"

Samuel Selden.—A small volume of *Poems* was published in Norfolk in 1880 by Dr. Samuel Selden. The author had been reared in that city, where he was born in 1834. He descended from English stock that has always maintained high social distinction in the Old Dominion. He was graduated at Hampden-

Sidney College, and afterwards took his degree in medicine in Charleston, S. C., in 1861. He practiced his profession in his native city; and when he died there in 1880, he was generally lamented for his ability and virtue.

Dr. Selden possessed poetic gifts of no mean order. It is to be regretted that failing health in his later years interfered with his literary work. He had the gift of high thought with the grace of artistic expression. We need only to read verses like the following in *The City of Pestilence* to see that he has the rare power of ennobling the commonplace:—

"Lo! Summer dies; woods change their hue;
The weeping skies are gray and cold,
And russet Autumn hastes to strew
Its bier with leaves of brown and gold.

"Through forest dome and mossy aisles,
Winds mutter dirges wild and dread,
Like priests in glowing Gothic piles
Chaunting their masses o'er the dead...

"The faded blossoms noiseless fall
In songless bowers and garden sere,
And curling from the chimneys tall
The smoke-clouds blue the city's air."

A Memorial Ode contains an excellent estimate of the character of General Robert E. Lee:—

"By gentle deeds and fortitude most rare,
Without repinings in adversity,
He showed how human virtue should upbear
Against sad destiny.

"With silvered head and in his fame's full noon,
The peerless Captain of the bloody strife,
He leaves posterity the priceless boon,
A grand, heroic life."

Now and Then is a poetic expansion of the Gospel story of Dives and Lazarus. God does not see as man sees:—

"He sees the king beneath the beggar's guise,
The beggar in the monarch's robe and crown;
Man's verdict is reversed beyond the skies;
The smile succeeds the frown.

"The widow's mite is costlier in his sight
Than royal purple robes or sparking gems,
And virtue struggling with grim want and blight,
Above all diadems."

Cypress and Holly is an elegy for a loved one, the news of whose death at sea suddenly turned glad expectations into mourning:—

"All day the sea-gulls o'er thee scream,
And ships, strange ships, above thee sail;
At night wild winds their dirges wail,
And waves in moonlit splendors gleam.

"The spring will come with scented gales,
And wake the rills, the buds unfold,
And birds on wings of red and gold
Will carol in thy native vales.

"But ah! no voice thy sleep can break,
Or to the dead restore their ghosts,
But His who, girt with angel hosts,
Shall come in pomp and bid thee wake."

The second half of the book is taken up with sonnets, which he handled with skill. In Walking by Faith, for example, apt thought is wedded to fitting form:—

"How gropes the soul that walks by outward sight,
That in its restless yearnings and sore needs
Still clings to rituals or human creeds,
Nor finds the source of inward strength and light!

"Our pomps and forms, alas! they but enthrall, Or often darken where they would illume; Oft prove truth's broidered shroud, or velvet pall, Or splendid sculptures that adorn its tomb!

"Walk thou by faith, not sight; trust not thine eyes:
As one who climbs the Alps, wild, steep, and grand,
Resigns the rein and on the guide relies,—
So in thy journey toward the Better Land,
When chasms yawn, or blinding storms arise,
Then, child-like, clasp thy Father's hand."

Abram J. Ryan.—Abram J. Ryan, better known as Father Ryan, belongs to the South rather than to Virginia, his native State. His poems, the slow accumulation of years, were first brought together in 1880. The poet modestly wished to call them verses; and, as he tells us, they "were written at random,—off and on, here, there, anywhere,—just as the mood came, with little of study and less of art, and always in a hurry." His poems do not exhibit a painstaking, polished art. They are largely the emotional outpourings of a heart that readily found expression in fluent, melodious lays. The poet-priest understood their character too well to assign them a very high place in the realm of song; yet the wish he expressed, that they might echo from heart to heart has been fulfilled in no small degree. In Sentinel Songs he says:—

"I sing with a voice too low

To be heard beyond to-day,
In minor keys of my people's woe,
But my songs pass away.

"To-morrow hears them not—
To-morrow belongs to fame—
My songs, like the birds', will be forgot,
And forgotten shall be my name.

"And yet who knows? Betimes
The grandest songs depart,
While the gentle, humble, and low-toned rhymes
Will echo from heart to heart."

Abram J. Ryan was born in Norfolk, Virginia, August 15, 1839, whither his parents, natives of Ireland, had immigrated not long before. He possessed the quick sensibilities characteristic of the Celtic race; and his love for Ireland is reflected in a stout martial lyric entitled *Erin's Flag*:—

"Lift it up! lift it up! the old Banner of Green!
The blood of its sons has but brightened its sheen;
What though the tyrant has trampled it down,
Are its folds not emblazoned with deeds of renown?"

· When he was seven or eight years of age, his parents removed to St. Louis. He is said to have shown great aptitude for learning, and in due course of time he entered the priest-hood of the Roman Catholic Church. His theological studies left a deep impression on his poetry. He not only treats of Scripture themes, as in St. Stephen, The Master's Voice, and A Christmas Chant, but he also finds subjects, not always happily, in the distinctive beliefs of his church.

On the outbreak of the Civil War, Father Ryan entered the Confederate army as a chaplain, though his martial ardor sometimes led him to serve in the ranks. His martial songs, such as The Sword of Robert Lee, The Conquered Banner, to which reference was made in a former chapter, and the March of the Deathless Dead, have been dear to many Southern hearts. He long refused to accept the results of the war. The wrongs of the so-called Reconstruction period aroused his ardent indignation, and found utterance in his song. But during the epidemic of yellow fever in 1878, his heart was touched by the

splendid generosity of the North; and, surrendering his sectional prejudice and animosity, he wrote Reunited:—

"Purer than thy own white snow,
Nobler than thy mountains' height;
Deeper than the ocean's flow,
Stronger than thy own proud might;
O Northland! to thy sister land,
Was late thy mercy's generous deed and grand."

The prevailing tone of Father Ryan's poetry is one of sadness. His harp rarely vibrated to cheerful strains. What was the cause of this sadness? It may have been his keen sense of the tragic side of human life; it may have been the enduring anguish that came from the tragic romance—the crucified love—of his youth. The poet himself refused to tell. In Lines—1875 he says:—

"Go list to the voices of air, earth, and sea,
And the voices that sound in the sky;
Their songs may be joyful to some, but to me
There's a sigh in each chord and a sigh in each key,
And thousands of sighs swell their grand melody.
Ask them what ails them: they will not reply.
They sigh—sigh forever—but never tell why.
Why does your poetry sound like a sigh?
Their lips will not answer you; neither shall I."

Yet, in spite of the prevailing tone of sorrow and weariness, Father Ryan was no pessimist. He held that life has "more of sweet than gall"—

"For every one: no matter who—
Or what their lot—or high or low;
All hearts have clouds—but heaven's blue
Wraps robes of bright around each woe;
And this is truest of the true:

"That joy is stronger here than grief,
Fills more of life, far more of years,
And makes the reign of sorrow brief;
Gives more of smiles for less of tears.
Joy is life's tree—grief but its leaves."

Father Ryan conceived of the poet's office as something seer-like or prophetic. With him, as with all great poets, the message counted for more than do rhythm and rhyme. Divorced from truth, art seemed to him but a skeleton masque. He preferred those melodies that rise on the wings of thought, and come to human hearts with an inspiration of faith and hope. He regarded genuine poets as the high priests of Nature. Their sensitive spirits, holding themselves aloof from common things, habitually dwell upon the deeper mysteries of life in something of a morbid loneliness. In *Poets* he says:—

"They are all dreamers; in the day and night
Ever across their souls
The wondrous mystery of the dark or bright
In mystic rhythm rolls.

"They live within themselves—they may not tell
What lieth deepest there;
Within their breast a heaven or a hell,
Joy or tormenting care.

"They are the loneliest men that walk men's ways,
No matter what they seem;
The stars and sunlight of their nights and days
Move over them in dream."

With Wordsworth, or rather with the great Apostle to the Gentiles, he held that Nature is but the vesture of God, beneath which may be discerned the divine glory and love. The visible seemed to him but an expression of the invisible:—

"For God is everywhere—and he doth find In every atom which His hand hath made A shrine to hide His presence, and reveal His name, love, power, to those who kneel In holy faith upon this bright below, And lift their eyes, thro' all this mystery, To catch the vision of the great beyond."

With this view of Nature, it was but natural that its sounds and forms—its birds and flowers—should inspire devotion. In St. Mary's, speaking of the songs and silences of Nature, he says:—

"God comes close to me here— Back of every roseleaf there He is hiding—and the air Thrills with calls to holy prayer; Earth grows far, and heaven near.

"Every single flower is fraught
With the very sweetest dreams,
Under clouds or under gleams
Changeful ever—yet meseems
On each leaf I read God's thought."

It can hardly be said that Father Ryan reaches lofty poetic heights. Neither in thought nor diction does he often rise above cultured commonplace. Fine artistic quality is supplanted by a sort of melodious fluency. Yet the form and tone of his poetry, nearly always in one pensive key, make a distinct impression, unlike that of any other American singer. Having once caught his distinctive note of weary melancholy, we can recognize it among a chorus of a thousand singers. It is to his honor that he has achieved a distinctive place in American poetry.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A more extended study of Father Ryan will be found in the author's Poets of the south.

Aldine S. Kieffer.—Among the poets of the great Valley of Virginia a high place must be assigned to Aldine S. Kieffer. He had the gift of poetic thought and poetic utterance; and though he did not essay any lofty themes, he has sung much that appeals to the heart and experience of humanity. His art is much beyond that commonly found among our writers of verse.

Though born in Missouri, Mr. Kieffer spent his life in Virginia. His early educational advantages were meager; but a thirst for knowledge, imbibed at his mother's knee, and fostered in his grandfather's study, made him in the course of time a well-read man, especially in history and poetry. The latter was with him a passion; and through the years he stored his memory with the richest treasures of the major English poets. He began to write for the press at fourteen, and at eighteen he edited the Musical Advocate—facts that exhibit at the same time his literary bent and his literary capacity.

At the beginning of the Civil War he enlisted in the army of Northern Virginia, and was under fire at Manassas July 21, 1861—a date which he afterwards observed as a memorable anniversary. His martial experience is reflected in a number of poems. In the preface to his *Hours of Fancy* published in 1881 he says: "There are verses relating to incidents of the late war published, not for hate's sake, but because their author lived and wrote and suffered during the years when—

# "Red war smote the land With shock of battle and with flood of flame,"

and for their appearance in this volume he makes no apology." No apology is needed; for in the various war poems there is no bitterness of hate or murmurings at the decrees of Heaven.

The first and longest of the poems is called *Three Vigils*, and tells the story of a presentiment before the battle of Fred-

ericksburg. A soldier was standing sentinel beneath a pine on the banks of the Rappahannock:—

"Once when the river hushed her moan,
And brighter beamed the stars that shone
On yonder wold and wooded hill,
And Nature whispered, 'Peace, be still!'
I heard, or thought I heard, my name
Three syllabled in tones divine,
As from the South the soft wind came
That waked the dreaming, whispering pine.
And then, a small hand clasped my own,
But, oh! the touch was cold as stone:
A moment, and it slipped away,
Whilst denser darkness round me lay."

The sentinel recognizes the mysterious whispering and handclasp as a premonition of death, and exacts a promise from his two friends to bury him beneath the pine. This was done after the terrible battle of the following day; and now—

"Above his silent dust the pine
Pours forth its mystic strains divine,
As summer's breeze sighs o'er the plain,
Or winter wails his wild refrain.
And after days the fact revealed
That on the night his doom was sealed,
His loved one's spirit passed away
Thro' death's dark portals into day."

The Phantom Bride, as the title suggests, is a weird ballad, and admirably wrought out.

A sad undertone pervades the volume before us. The tragedy of life often weighs upon the author's heart; and then there is a frequent and tender sigh for the loss of an early love. Is this recurring lament a poetic fiction or an overshadowing experience? So far as the poetry is concerned, it makes but

little difference; and in most hearts there are sweet memories and tender regrets; fanciful pictures of what might have been. And though it is not well to live too much in such memories, they often give rise to a poesy that invests life with a subdued delicacy and fragrance. In A Rhapsody, our author muses on our sad years,—

"Which glide away Like ships that bear our treasure out to sea,"

and perceives that hope after hope decays, and finds "no coronal of joy before he dies":—

"And yet, beneath the stars, upon the hills,
By darkness shrouded, and from men removed,
I hear the ripple of the silver rills
And voices whispering, as if they reproved
The wayward thoughts that fill a wayward soul;
While a mysterious something—undefined—
Awes my whole being, and with sweet control
Speaks this mild language to my tortured mind:

"The world owes more to Crosses than to Crowns;
More to the thorn than to the laurel leaf;
Less to the princess in her tinseled gowns
Than to the widow in her rags and grief;
So quiet thee, poor soul, and tread thy way,
Though rough the path, by Sorrow's night o'ercast,
And learn 'tis well that earthly hopes decay,
And sink into the Dead Sea of the past!'"

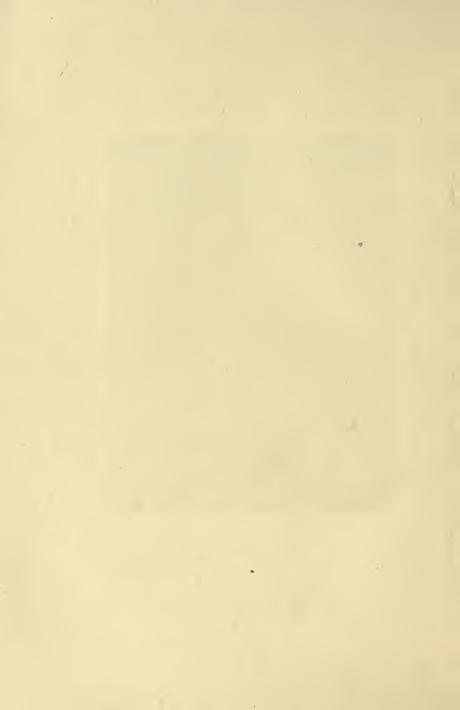
An Autumn Idyl breathes a deep sympathy with the soul of Nature; but at the same time the beautiful objects about the poet recall the long years ago, when—

"Two forms once stood where the one stands now."

But there is a sweet hope that illumines his sadness—the hope of meeting in the beautiful spirit land:—



JAMES BARRON HOPE



"We met no more! and yet we shall meet
Somewhere, some day. In the far-off clime
Our hands shall clasp and our souls shall greet
The mystic measure of Love's sweet rhyme,
Where no sad sound of an Autumn night
Shall smite the hills of endless delight."

There are several poems on Scripture themes—Hagar and Ishmael, By Babel's Stream, Jacob's Well—which contain more poetry than is usually found in such verse. Though the prevailing tone of the poetry is in the minor key, we find here and there a bugle note calling men to heroic combat. The Mountain Pine suggests a splendid type of manhood:—

"God give us men! like the noble pine,
Who will wear their robes of green,
Though others whine and sadly repine
When adversity's blasts blow keen:
Brave men who carry their youth along
Far into the winter of age,
And blend their voices in cheerful song,
Though fierce the tempest may rage."

Many of the minor lyrics have been set to music; but though many of them possess poetic beauty, there is no other that has been so popular as *Twilight is Falling*. The melody is happily wedded to the words, and the song has been sung in all parts of our country:—

"Twilight is stealing
Over the sea,
Shadows are falling
Dark on the lea;
Borne on the night-winds
Voices of yore
Come from the far-off shore.

"Far away beyond the starlit skies,
Where the love-light never, never dies,
Gleameth a mansion filled with delight,
Sweet, happy home so bright."

Mr. Kieffer was for many years editor of the Musical Million, in which many of his poems originally appeared.

### CHAPTER XVI

## Poets from 1882 to 1889

Sara Henderson Smith.—Mrs. Sara Henderson Smith was the wife of General Francis H. Smith, of the Virginia Military Institute. From her grandmother she inherited unusual intellectual gifts; and as her poems show, she attained a Christian character of singular delicacy and beauty:—

"Be this my token when I am gone!
Dimly reflecting His heart of love,
Tears dried from eyes that had still wept on,
Dimming with shadows the light above.
And love, and service, and life complete,
May the servant rest at the dear Lord's feet."

In 1884 Mrs. Smith gave to the world a small volume of verse entitled *Up to the Light, with Other Religious and Devotional Poems*. The title poem is a word of sweet encouragement to the struggling soul:—

"'Up to the light,' through doubts and fears—
Up through the mists of many tears—
Up the steep ascent whose summits rise
Till lost in the blue of the upper skies;
There, in the realms of Eternal day,
Sorrow and sighing shall flee away;
Rough or lonely the path may be,
Upward, still upward, it leads to Thee."

Many of the poems give the keynote in a text from Scripture. But unlike much of the poetry of this sort, written by pious, earnest spirits without special literary culture and training, the poems before us are generally pleasing and helpful. As in the

poetry of Keble, there is always delicacy of feeling, and often commonplace truths are exalted by the charm of poetic imagery. Both as an illustration of her art and as a production well worth reading, her poem What is Life is inserted in full:—

"I saw him in the morn of life,
A noble, generous one—
Floating his bark on pleasure's sea,
As honor steered it on—
The breath of hope had swelled the sails,
And sunshine o'er it hung—
Away it sped its dazzling course,
While carelessly he sung—

"Oh! life has naught but happiness— Whate'er the wise may say— Its freshness and its bloom from me Can never pass away.

"I saw him then at summer eve,
He bent his head to hear
The scarcely uttered words which fell
Like music on his ear;
A lovely girl had murmured them,
As on his arms she hung,
And radiant was the lover's face
As once again he sung—

"Oh! life has naught but happiness— Whate'er the wise may say— Its freshness and its bloom from me Can never pass away.

"I saw them both again, and she
Was trembling at his side,
And solemn were the words by which
He claimed her as his bride.
A crowd of friends were gathered round,
But to his ear there sprung
A strain his lips had often breathed
When joyfully he sung—

"Oh! life has naught but happiness— Whate'er the wise may say— Its freshness and its bloom from me Can never pass away.

"I saw his happy home—his wife
Was o'er an infant bent,
Who, to his matchless smile, a look
Of answering beauty sent;
He gazed upon the scene, as if
His earthly hopes were flung
Upon these frail and gentle ones—
And then once more he sung—

"Oh! life has naught but happiness— Whate'er the wise may say— Its freshness and its bloom from me Can never pass away.

"I saw a mourner stand alone
Beside a marble tomb;
One flower was taken in the bud,
The other in its bloom—
And to the cherished spot he brought
A heart by sorrow wrung,
But a watch was kept by angels there,
And thus the spirits sung—

"Oh! life has many a bitter cup— Whate'er the young may say— But the glory and the peace of Heaven Will never pass away."

There are few lives into which such tragedies and sorrows do not come.

H. C. Parsons.—Oftener, perhaps, than we think, are the interests of business and the love of the muses combined. The Reaper and Other Poems is an attractive, illustrated volume by

the late H. C. Parsons, for a long time owner of the Natural Bridge. While developing that historic property and taking a broad-minded interest in the advancement of Virginia, his adopted State, he kept a soul responsive to the beauties of nature and to the tragedies and heroisms of human life.

The volume before us was printed only for private circulation. In a prefatory word addressed to his friends, the author tells the occasion of his volume. "These poems were written," he says, "because the writing rested me. They go to the printer because my child requests it. Let no one think that I am self-deceived or deluded into new paths from the daily work that satisfies my need and my ambition."

But the poet naturally hopes that his labors will not be entirely unappreciated. "Perhaps in the warmth of your fireside," he continues, "these pages may glow with a light that is half their own, and the circle draw closer and the hour pass pleasantly; perhaps one who reads alone may find something here written that will turn his thoughts tenderly to the Virginia mountains, or give him a clearer faith or a braver heart. Then I shall be glad."

The title poem is a tribute to Cyrus H. McCormick, the inventor of the reaper. Owing to this invention, William H. Seward said, "the line of civilization moved westward thirty miles each year."

"Well hast thou won, McCormick, the tribute that we bring; Of all the lords of labor we name thee as the king."

The Divided House seems to point to a domestic tragedy; The Brown, Blue, and Gray are maidenly eyes that were filled with sadness when the poet went away from home, and that haunted him during all his absence. How Gretchen Outrode the Flood describes a deed of heroism, in which affection triumphs over danger and destruction. Virginia is a strong, manly appeal to

the sons of the Old Dominion—the best piece of work in the book. A few stanzas are quoted:—

"We will not blame the past,
Or count its sad illusions; it was very great
To found and wisely rule earth's proudest State;
And when it pleased thee, careless of thy fate,
To smite its pillars till the world did wait
To see the great towers fall.

"There yet is time to learn,
And subjects to command. The swift power that fills
Thy river-banks shall work for him who wills;
And black slaves prisoned in thy lifted hills
Await thy order, while a strong life thrills
The veins of all thy sons.

"Thy treasures are not told.

Stores of coal and iron, gold and salt, and oil Fill shoreless caverns, and thy fountains boil With living waters, and thy unspent soil Awaits a longer plowshare; for their mighty toil

Thy subjects are impatient.

"But know, thy sons must lead
And bravely work! No white hand ever broke
The padlock of the hills; no gentle stroke
Makes mountain echoes where, in fire and smoke,
The black-starred crown is wrought, and forged the iron yoke
For tribute-paying people."

There are a half-dozen other poems that do not materially differ in quality from those already mentioned. The poetry of Mr. Parsons is characterized by strength rather than by exquisite refinement. In his more ambitious efforts there is a largeness of conception and treatment that could come only from a broadly cultured and practical mind; and the mastery of versification is surprising in an author, whose principal work lay in the field of industrial enterprise.

Mrs. Winston.—Mrs. Rosalie Bankhead Winston, of Fredericksburg, Va., published in 1885 a small volume of mingled prose and verse. It is entitled *Pilate's Question; or, What is Truth?* The title poem is a slight poetic romance, in which the authoress italicizes all the thoughts and sentiments—and they are very numerous—which she regards as particularly important. It is divided into nine brief chapters, and the story, after running its course like a novelette in prose, reaches a happy ending. The hero and heroine are happily married at last:—

"And much of earthly joy was theirs;
But the crowning grace of all was this—
They did not live alone for self and
Selfish ends, but brightened the lives
Of all around them; and it was given
Them to know that earthly things are
Only shadows of things that are,
And shall be in the far ages of eternity."

The moral sentiment of the book is altogether commendable and wholesome; for it teaches, "as old Dinah said"—

"'Taint the outside things
That makes folks happy here."

The occasion and purpose of the book are sufficiently indicated in the preface. "I am induced," says the authoress, "by the persuasion of many friends, to cast abroad this little work, a waif on life's wild waters, in the earnest hope that it may be the bearer of some word of comfort to the seeker after truth. If it accomplishes this end, I shall not heed the rough voice of the critic. I have endeavored to bring before the reader in this simple story 'the old, old truth,' that we fill our lives with nothingness, mistaking the false for the true, and grasping the shadow for the substance."

Graham Claytor.—Law and literature have always been closely wedded in the South. An illustration is found in Otterdale; or, Pen Pictures of Farm Life, and Other Poems published by the Hon. Graham Claytor, of Liberty, Va., in 1885. Mr. Claytor entered upon the practice of law at the Bedford bar in 1878, and became Commonwealth's attorney in 1895. He made occasional excursions into politics, and was elected State senator from Bedford, his native county, in 1899. But he found time, in the midst of his legal duties, to indulge both in fiction and poetry. Two novels, Pleasant Waters and Wheat and Tares, besides two volumes of poetry, stand in his name.

The general character of Otterdale is indicated in its alternative title, Pen Pictures of Farm Life. The author was brough up in an old ancestral home in the country, the charm of which is reflected in the precious memories of receding years. In a brief prefatory address the poet invites the gentle reader to—

"Leave awhile the marts
Of busy trade, and roam with me about
The old ancestral home, and shout along
Its ancient halls and climb its winding stairs;
And loiter along the old familiar paths,
Across the fields to church and school and mill;
And clamber up the steep and lofty cliffs,
And fish and bathe within the limpid streams,
And feel again the glow of youthful dreams."

The first poem, The Old Homestead, is a tender and graphic picture of the home in which he was brought up. Every tree surrounding the old mansion appears before his mind with fond distinctness. The beehives beneath the pear tree are recalled again, and the vine-clad walks that stretch between the well-tilled squares of the fertile garden. The orchard is tenderly recalled, with all the merry sport associated with the gathering

of apples and the rich streaming of the heavy cider-press. The landscape of the famous Piedmont region, as it appeared from the solid structure of brick and stone and as the boy had often seen it from "its dormer windows tall," is thus portrayed:—

"Behold! a broad expanse of landscape rich In undulating beauty lies; wild wood And gently rolling hills and verdant fields And laughing brooks fed by a thousand rills; And all along the horizon, distant, dim, A circling range of dark, blue mountains rise In dreamy grandeur to the mellow sky."

How many of us, who have reached middle life, look back with delight to the old mill in the country! Its scenes and associations, as known in boyhood, come again in poetic beauty. A tender sadness creeps into the heart that those distant joys can return no more. It is such scenes and delights that the poet depicts for us in *The Mill*:—

"Moss-covered roof and mildewed walls
And battered doors, and old in years, it stands
A sign of peace and plenty in the land.
"Tis built far o'er the water, yet the road
Can scarcely pass along that way—so near
The towering cliff comes down. The old stone dam
Has stood against a hundred rushing floods;
So smooth and evenly the water falls
That, as it shimmers in the silver sheen
Of summer's sun, it seems a moving sheet
Of solid crystal clear, and here all day
The busy clacking of the wheel is heard."

The Harvest portrays scenes which agricultural machinery is making more and more rare, when—

"All the neighboring hands With merry song and gleaming blades go forth To reap the golden grain."

In the Sabbath there is a vivid picture of a religious service

in a country church, such as may still be seen in communities that are somewhat remote from the main currents of our rushing life:—

"Long ere the pastor on his old horse comes,
The farmers gather in from neighboring homes,
Assemble round the old church door, and sit
Upon the grass, or roots of trees, or stones,
Beneath the friendly shade of ancient oaks,
And gossip there until the 'church begin.'"

Feeding the Swine, The School, and Winter all contain pleasing and faithful pictures of rural life. From the last mentioned poem a few lines are given, which will recall fond and pleasing memories to many a one whose hair is being silvered with age:—

"Pile on the wood, and fill the iron dogs,
And let the flames roar up the chimney wide,
And send the warmth and light around the room!
Here oft we sit far in the silent night,
Our lessons con, and chestnuts roast, or list
To weird tales of goblins and of ghosts;
And creep, half frightened, in the dark to bed."

The remaining poems in this volume scarcely call for remark. They are not equal to the farm pictures we have been considering. The extracts given show us wherein Mr. Claytor's strength as a poet chiefly lies. It is found in the vivid portrayal of scenes which memory invests with a tender poetic light. He was not gifted with a high lyrical frenzy; but he has seen clearly and pictured vividly many humble scenes that appeal to a wide human experience. His verse makes delightful and wholesome reading.

Margaret B. Wren.—It has been the misfortune of Virginia minstrelsy that it rarely has been taken seriously. It has been made a pastime, but not a vocation. It has voiced occasional moods and fancies, but has not uttered the deep, sustained symphonies of a mighty heart and brain. The richest treasures of the muses are granted only to those who seek them with the consecration of a whole life.

Echoes from the Heart is a volume of verse by Margaret Breckinridge Wren; it contains two hundred and fifty-nine pages, and was published in Richmond in 1887. "This miscellaneous collection," says the authoress, "has been written at different periods,—just when the mood or fancy would suggest,—often under difficulties, and at all times with little bodily strength, which is essential to any successful mental effort." She ventures upon publication with misgivings, and, as so many others before her have done, at the "earnest solicitations of friends."

The poems of this volume are mostly subjective; they voice the moods, thoughts, and emotions of the writer. A tinge of sadness, at least of seriousness, rests upon them all. A little higher poetic quality would have made them very welcome to pensive, chastened souls. To the question which many have asked, Will We Know Our Loved Ones There, the author gives a comforting, affirmative answer:—

"Ah! as truly as yon heaven
Stretches far its great expanse,
And as truly as man springeth
From God's hand, and not from chance,—
Just so truly in me liveth
The belief that when we share
In the blessings of the blessed,
We will know our loved ones there."

Often we desire to know the secrets of the future, and for-

tune-telling is not entirely a thing of the past; but, after all, it is well that the veil has been drawn before our eyes:—

"Ha! 'tis well we cannot borrow
Anything the future holds;
Well we cannot see the morrow,
With its gladness and its sorrow—
Well they're hid in mystic folds.

"Tis a wise God that is keeping
Thus from sight both good and ill
By the heavy veil that's sweeping
"Tween us and the years now sleeping—
A wise God; so, hearts, be still!"

Sister Agnes is a poetic romance reminding us of Father Ryan's Their Story Runneth Thus. The vow of a nun stands between the love of two hearts forever. Virginia is a passionate outcry at what the poetess regarded as the State's dishonor in the triumph of the Readjuster movement in 1882. A single stanza is quoted:—

"Weep bitter tears, Virginia;
For never more you'll see
The stranger come, as oft he's done,
To make his home with thee.
Ah, no! he'll go to other lands,
Where honor none forgets,
And where men do not think it wrong
To pay their honest debts."

The change of administration two years later evoked a triumphant pæan, but it is not necessary to dwell on the poetry of partisan politics.

Amélie Rives.—Miss Amélie Rives—now Princess Troubetz-koy—whose early life was spent chiefly at Castle Hill, Albemarle County, Va., is a woman of extraordinary versatility and power.

She is an adept in music and painting; in literature, she has essayed the novel, the drama, and lyric poetry; and, as old Dr. Johnson said of Goldsmith, she has touched nothing which she has not adorned.

Her writings, whether in prose or poetry, are prevailingly subjective. She belongs to the school of George Eliot, and her method as a novelist may be designated as that of psychologic realism. Her stories turn upon soul experiences and transformations rather than upon outward incidents. In the choice of incident, as in the straw-stack scene in The Quick or the Dead, she is sometimes wilful, perverse, and intolerable. But in profound spiritual experiences, as in the regeneration of Tanis, the Sang-Digger—an altogether strong and steady piece of work—she is frequently admirable. In depicting her female characters, she has dipped her pen, more or less deeply, into her own heart. She exhibits a rare insight into the changing moods and motives of women; and, as a rule, they are far better individualized and far more interesting than her men.

It is to be regretted that Madame Troubetzkoy has not published a volume of lyric verse. Scattered through our leading magazines there are many short poems of hers that reach a high degree of poetic insight and artistic expression. In A Mood, published in Harper's, 1887, we have a picture of her wild, free, exultant spirit in "the sweet weather that autumn brings":—

"For wild am I as thy winds and rains—
Free to come and to go as they;
Love's moon sways not the tides of my veins;
There is no voice that can bid me stay.
Out and away on the drenched brown lea!
Out to the great glad heart of the year!
Nothing to grieve for, nothing to fear;
Fetterless, flawless, a maiden free!"

Love's Seasons, besides teaching that "love-time lasts the year," contains some pretty, descriptive lines on the various seasons. She caught with rare fulness and accuracy the varying forms of earth and sky, and has depicted them with the touch of a gifted artist. Here is a picture of summer:—

"All heavy hang the apple boughs,
Weighed down by balls of yellow gold;
The poppy cups, so fiery bright,
Meseems would burn the hearts they hold.
The summer's here, the summer's here—
The kiss-time of the year, my dear."

In her poetry our authoress is not often didactic; but verses like the following, found in *Harper's*, 1891, might well make us regret that she has not oftener essayed the high, prophetic office:—

"Call not pain's teaching punishment: the fire
That lights a soul, even which its torture blesses;
The sorrow that unmakes some old desire,
And on the same foundation builds a higher,
Hath more than joy for him who acquiesces.

"Ah, darkness teaches us to love the light;
Not as 'tis loved by children, warm abed,
And crying for the toys put by at night,
But even as a blinded painter might,
Whose soul paints on in dreams of radiance fied."

Grief and Faith is a series of thirteen sonnets which appeared in Harper's for May, 1887. It is a poem that reveals not only high gifts of poetic thought and emotion, but also a rare technical mastery of poetic form. The poem is a sort of dramatic monologue, in which a husband gives utterance to an overwhelming grief, as he stands by the lifeless body of a fair and tenderly cherished wife. It repeats the lesson, dwelt on by

Schiller, Tennyson, and Browning, of the imperishable nature of love. In the silence and desolation of grief,—

"Thus spake her soul unto my listening soul:

'Peace, peace, beloved! Love can never die,
Though hearts that loved be dust. Should ages roll
Between the present and the future, I
Will hold thee more mine own than ere this dole
Smote us like lightning from a cloudless sky."

But the principal poetical work of Amélie Rives is *Herod and Mariamne*, a drama of exceptional intensity of feeling and expression. It is a drama of jealousy and crime, based on the narrative of Josephus, which it follows with sufficient closeness in its incidents, but whose shadowy characters, especially the women, it invests with a passionate personality. Herod is portrayed in unrelieved baseness, and his frequent and sudden changes from loving transports to murderous jealousy seem too childish to be credible or possible. The character of Mariamne, both in her wifely devotion and irreconcilable hatred, is magnificently depicted. The female characters in general, in their contentions, enmities, and jealous schemings, are drawn from nature.

The following extract is taken from the first scene of the first act; it shows the passionate character of Herod, the queenly dignity of Mariamne, and the beauty of that wifely devotion which was soon to be turned into inappeasible hate and to be ended by her murder:—

MABIAMNE. Why dost thou doubt me? Why should I not love thee,
Who art the chief of men and lovers? Nay,
If, as thou sayest, I shrink, it is because
My love doth fear the violence of thy love,
Not I thyself,—not Mariamne Herod.

HEROD. Love is not blind, as the Greeks fable it,
For he doth look from these fair eyes o' thine,
Else am I Pleasure's bondman.

MAR. Nay, not so.

Thou'rt husband to the truest wife in Jewry.

HER. And the least loving.

MAR. Wilt thou wrong me still?

I know not how to dress out love in words.

I can but tell thee o'er and o'er again

The naked fact, I love thee.

Her. Would to heaven

I knew what loving means to thee!

MAR. I'll tell thee:

It means to put myself beyond myself,
To think of him I love in that self's stead,
To be sleep's enemy because of him,
Because of him to be the friend of pain,
To have no thought, no wish, no dream, no memory,
That is not servant to him; to forget
All earlier loves in his,—all hates, all wrongs;
Being meek to him, though proud unto all others;
Gentle to him, though to all others harsh;
To him submissive, though unto high heaven
Something rebellious. Last, to keep my patience
And bear his doubts, who have his children borne.

Her. Enough, enough. Thou most magnificent
Of queens and women, I will never doubt thee
After to-day.

MAR. Alas, my lord, to-morrow—

To-morrow 'll be to-day.

I will not doubt thee

So long as I do live.

MAR. Oh, that wouldst not!

Doubt is the shaft wherewith Love wounds himself: Doubt me no more, and be no more unhappy."

Apart from the passion and development of the plot, there are occasional lines, whose felicity of thought and statement fit them to become the current coin of quotation. Take, for example, these lines:—

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HER.

- "For when queens quarrel kings are kings in vain."
- "A Herod laughs where a mere man would weep."
- "Doubt is the shaft wherewith Love wounds himself."
- "Who rouses hate must look for hell to follow."

It is impossible to fortell what other works this gifted authoress may produce; but she has already written enough to give her a high place in Virginia literature. Let us hope that the chastenings of time and sorrow will not silence her muse, but call forth a still deeper and richer music.

Thomas Nelson Page.—It is known, perhaps, to few of the readers of Thomas Nelson Page's books that he is a poet as well as novelist. The poetic strain, which is indeed evident in his novels and negro dialect stories, found expression in due metrical form in *Befo' the War*. This volume which was published in 1888, is the joint work of Thomas Nelson Page and A. C. Gordon, the far greater part of the brief poems being the composition of the latter author. As Mr. Gordon's gifts as a poet have been discussed elsewhere, his part of the work before us will not come under review.

The half dozen poems written by Mr. Page, among which are Uncle Gabe's White Folks, Little Jack, and Marse Phil are closely akin to the prose stories of In Old Virginia, which appeared a year earlier. We recognize the same mastery of the negro dialect, the same keen insight into the negro character, and the same appreciation of the pathetic relations often existing between master and slave. If the stories of Mah Lady and Marse Chan might be easily turned into verse, the poems of Uncle Gabe's White Folks and Marse Phil might with equal ease be turned into charming tales in prose.

In form these poems are dramatic monologues, with an old negro servant as speaker. This form, the invention of which is to be ascribed to Robert Browning, is singularly effective; for it gives room for a display of the histrionic talent—the swift emotional changes—belonging to the negro character. A little imagination enables us to see the varying expression of face and the supple courtesy of body, which characterize the negro in his anxiety to please.

Two or three stanzas from *Uncle Gabe's White Folks*, the first poem in the book, must suffice by way of illustration:—

"Sarvent, Marster! Yes, sah, dat's me—
Ole Unc' Gabe's my name;
I thankee, Marster, I'm 'bout, yo' see:
 'An' de ole 'ooman?' She much desame,
Po'ly an' plainin,' thank de Lord!
But de Marster's gwine ter come back from 'broad.

"'Fine ole place?' Yes, sah, 'tis so;
An' mighty fine people my white folks war—
But you ought ter' a' seen it years ago,
When de Marster an' de Mistis lived up dyah;
When de niggers 'd stan' all roun' de do',
Like grains o' corn on de cornhouse flo'."

Of course the stranger is the son of the negro's old master; and when at length he makes himself known, the former slave, with a fine exhibition of the naive characteristics of his race, breaks forth in exultant joy:—

"I knowed you, chile—
I knowed you soon's I see'd your face!
Whar has you been dis blessed while?
Done come back an' buy de place?
Oh, bless de Lord for all his grace!
De ravins shell hunger, an' shell not lack:
De Marster, de Young Marster's done come back!"

## CHAPTER XVII

## Poets from 1890 to 1895

"Arcade Echoes."—The student spirit in our institutions of learning is a queer thing—a life and law unto itself. It does not take life seriously; and in its exuberant vitality, it is apt, in many cases, to show itself restive under restraint and discipline. It develops a lingo of its own; and so a student never fails in recitation, but "corks" or "busts." He is apt to have a moral code which takes liberties with the decalogue and the customs of civilized society. To take advantage of a professor is like a stratagem in war—entirely permissible if successful; and to carry off the gates of the slumbering and unsuspecting citizen, or to rouse the town with unearthly noises—all this, at proper intervals, is regarded as the correct thing. And "drafting" or "calicoing," with its elegant "dikes" and charming flirtations, sometimes occupies more time and attention than unsentimental fathers, who pay the bills, could wish.

These reflections have been started by Arcade Echoes, a volume of verse selected by Thomas L. Wood from the Virginia University Magazine between the years 1859 and 1890. It reflects, in a clear way, much of the undergraduate life of that famous institution. In college journalism, which in recent years has become so general, one does not expect poetry of a very high order, unless, as sometimes happens, a member of the faculty lends a hand.

In the volume before us we find here and there echoes from Greece and Rome; occasionally the undergraduate poet, with a rather painful effort to keep his face straight, undertakes to illumine some serious subject. But these are sporadic attempts.

The favorite themes are Corking, The Big Horn of the Range, which all the tinners of Charlottesville unite to construct—

"One night when all the world was still, and silence hovered round, O'er hill and dale, o'er floss and fill, was heard an awful sound; So wild and stern, yet full and clear, it rode upon the blast, That Monticello caught it up, and back the echo cast"—

and the Fierce Dog or Sal's Towser, whose relentless teeth snatched from the frightened and fleeing lover's pantaloons a capacious piece and so rendered his intended call utterly impossible.

But most of all the tender and sentimental are dear to the undergraduate's heart; and so we discover such tale-telling themes as My Little Classic Divinity, Only a Kiss, She has Drifted Away, A Beaux Yeux, A Woman's Hair, and many others which are likely to start a smile, and perhaps call forth a tear.

Mr. Thomas L. Wood, the collector of these amateur verses, has judiciously omitted, as he informs us, the morbid or affected imitations of Byron and Poe. He traces these effusions to their proper sources, which are not, as the authors fondly imagine, a sublime, ill-fated genius, but improvident and unhygienic habits. "Dark references," he says, "in style, and often in the words of Mr. Poe, to blighted hopes and saddened lives are, we believe, inspired less by mysterious afflictions than by undigested suppers; and longings to flee to sundry distant isles—methods of transportation being no consideration—where lone seas howl as a steady occupation, and false man ne'er comes and woman's eye is absent, arise frequently from the implacable natures of tailors and misunderstandings with the washer-woman."

William B. Greene.—A Legend of Old Virginia is a small pamphlet published in London in 1891. Its author is William Batchelder Greene, and the poem was printed only for private circulation. The Legend is a rather shadowy story of the Civil War. The lover who went away with soul aflame returns at last as a ghost:—

"O angels of night! abide in your place— Or, should ye confront us, be angels of grace!— And slowly it turned its luminous face, And Marion shrieked, 'He is dead! he is dead!' Yet 'twas not the cry of horror or dread; But the stound that must be when a spirit's set free.

"And the soul that met soul blew a kiss in the air That flew to the starlands and united the pair; From the arch of the night the twain now shine forth As a sign to the living of this plighting of troth, While the river in rapture reflects them in bliss, And the whispering willows soft echo the kiss. And thus hath night come on the homestead outcast, The mantle material of memories past."

James B. Morgan.—James Brainerd Morgan is the author of Song-Sermons and Other Poems, published in 1892, and also of Strollings in Song-Land, published in 1893. The first volume contains a biographical sketch of the author. He is a native of Berkeley County, and descends from Colonial and Revolutionary heroes. He began writing verse—as most poets of genius have done—when he was quite young. "Since that time," the biographical sketch informs us, "his poetic contributions have appeared in a number of the leading magazines and periodicals of the country."

It is to Mr. Morgan's credit that he has been an ardent advocate of temperance and enthusiastic Sunday-school worker. The volumes before us show that his pen has been used—and the biographical sketch says "effectively used"—in behalf of these great human interests. Some of his poems have been set to music, and others have been appropriated, so the sketch says, "by unscrupulous writers as an easy means of securing a repution." It is not easy to conceive, however, that a literary thief would be so deficient in judgment.

The poems of the first volume are what their title indicates, Song-Sermons; and most of them, like ordinary prose sermons, take a text. The sentiment is proper and the doctrine uncorrupt. If inserted in our popular Sunday-school hymnals, they would not create a discord by rising above or sinking below the average excellence. There is nothing better in the book than Sunrise, which in justice to the author, is here given:—

"Turn your face toward the sunrise,
Let its brightness fill your heart
With new light and warmth and courage,
And all shadows bid depart.

"Ever look unto the sunrise,
Walking, working in its light;
And the shadows fall behind you,
And your life shall know no night."

The second volume, *Strollings in Song-Land*, reaches, we are glad to say, a somewhat higher level.

J. R. Greenway.—Mr. Greenway is the author of a small collection of poems to which he has given the title *Here and There*. It consists chiefly of pieces which originally appeared in the *Religious Herald* and other church papers, and which are neither better nor worse than the average original poems published in that obliging class of periodicals. Many of them are comments on texts of Scripture, and their unexceptional orthodoxy never deviates into genuine poetry.

The book was published, under peculiar circumstances, as a scheme of benevolence. The profits were to be given, as the preface at the end of the book tells us, to a church in Albemarle, the roof of which had "leaks in several places, and no one has yet offered to repair it gratis." "In view of these facts," continues the author, "I have no hesitation in asking the reader to get his or her friends to buy copies of this little book." It is to be hoped that a sufficient sum was realized to repair the defective roof. The modesty or the judgment of the author permitted him to give only his initials on the title page.

Mrs. Martha J. Claiborne.—Hawthorne Leaves, by Mrs. Martha J. Claiborne, is a volume of two hundred pages. It contains more than a hundred poems, all of which breathe a reflective, religious spirit. The themes are taken from the ranges of thought common to serious, cultured minds; there is no effort at what is fanciful or remote from every day experiences. The versification, while lacking the striking word and happy phrase that would give it distinction, is correct and skilful. The style might have been formed on Longfellow's earlier poetry; for the meters are all simple and the diction is that of ordinary life.

The first poem *This Blessed Day*, is a pious tribute to Christmas. Of *Faith*, the second poem, it is said-

"She beckons—and we follow her,
Not knowing where we go,
Not turning back, though faint the light
Our weary path may show."

Then follow The Song of the Stars, A Life Lesson, My Journey, The Triumph of Time, Sing Me a Song, and so on, which will show the class of subjects that appealed to the poet's imagination. They reveal a pure, refined womanhood. Most

of the poems suffer somewhat from a tendency to diffuseness; or is it the impatience of this telegraphic commercial age that makes us a little intolerant of long-drawn poetic form?

As exemplifying Mrs. Claiborne's art, a few stanzas from The Answer are given:—

"Is there ever a point we can reach in life,
Where the heart can pausing say,
'I have not a care, or a feverish wish,
To worry my life to-day?'

"Is there ever an hour of such sweet content,
That the heart can rest and tell
Alone of the pleasant things it found,
Uncaring what befell?

"Was there ever a love, so true and deep,
And ceaseless in its flow,
That the clear, sweet stream was always full,
And the heart no thirst could know?

"Was there ever a faith, so firm and strong,
That it throttled every doubt,
And hushed the waking voice of fear
With bold, exultant shout?

"I asked of all I met on the way,
And still no answer's given;
I asked of my heart and heard it say,
Not here! not here, in Heaven."

Somehow this poem reminds us of Mrs. Margaret J. Preston; and it certainly would not have detracted from her poetic fame.

Col. Thomas J. Evans.—Sir Francis Drake, and Other Fugitive Poems, by Col. Thomas J. Evans, was published in Richmond in 1895. These poems were written, not to express some truth that burdened the author's soul, but rather as an agreeable

pastime. They are not, therefore, to be taken too seriously. They were published by the poet's daughter as a memorial to her father after his death; and to those who knew him well and enjoyed the genial humor of his nature, the volume before us has been no doubt a welcome souvenir.

Col. Thos. J. Evans was a native of King William County, where he was born February 2, 1822. He received his education in Richmond, where he later studied and entered upon the practice of law. He gradually rose to distinction, became a member of the legislature, and enjoyed an enviable reputation as a public speaker. His ready gifts in versification were invoked on various public occasions, of which fact the volume in question gives ample evidence.

In the Civil War he was colonel of the nineteenth regiment of Virginia militia, and saw active service in the bloody fields around Richmond. His genial personality made friends and kept them. "He was," as his daughter tells us, "a true-hearted man. Duplicity and deceit found no favor in his eyes and had no place in his heart. He was a loving and tender husband and father, a friend rich in affection, a citizen who served his city and State loyally and freely." After all, to deserve such a tribute is more than to be a successful poet.

The title poem Sir Francis Drake, which is the last in the book, is a brief metrical story of the great admiral's early life. As an illegitimate child, the future admiral was cared for by a community of nuns, who took great interest and pride in the little waif.

"The chilling wind, the winter's breath, Blew cold late in December; Because he did not freeze to death, The sisters called him Ember."

When he had grown to be a bright, stout lad, he became a seaman under the name of Drake.

"He saw old Ocean, deep and wide,
His waves with foaming crest;
He saw the frigate proudly ride
Upon his heaving breast.

"He saw the iceberg mountain high,
The white bear on its side,
As forcibly it drifted by,
The plaything of the tide.

"He saw the storm in all its wrath,
And heard its mighty roar;
He saw the sea without a path
To lead to any shore."

The rest of the story is well known; the abilities of the young seaman rapidly gained recognition, and at last the Queen honored him with the highest naval office at her disposal.

The other pieces of the little volume are divided between the humorous and the serious, the general scope of which may be inferred from such consecutive titles as Welcome to De Molay, Phoebus and the Fat Lady, A Patriotic Piece, Chicken Fixin's, He Chastens in Kindness, Sunbeams and Shadows, and Advice to a Bachelor. The brief Sunbeams and Shadows will exhibit the modest height to which his muse at its best ascends:—

"There's not a heart that beats with life,
But knows its peace, but has its strife,
But has its shadows of the night,
Its sunbeams too, its morning light.
Yes, every heart, the false, the true,
Has shadows, and its sunbeams, too."

John Howard.—The Mystic Circle of Kate's Mountain, by John Howard, was published in pamphlet form in 1895. The poem is only a fragment, and originally appeared in the Southern Literary Messenger for November, 1861. The occasion of

the poem is thus given in a note: "In the summer of 1860, a party of ladies and gentlemen at the Greenbrier White Sulphur formed the purpose of making a morning excursion to Kate's Mountain (about three miles distant), the highest point of the ranges encircling the springs, and planting upon its summit a signal banner to mark and commemorate the height of their conquest." It was a merry party, filling the day with pleasantry, laughter, and song.

The poet of the party "unwisely promised" to commemorate the day's achievement in song. Accordingly, the poem, "sketched by pen or pencil, as an idle fancy prompted during a morning hour in the mountains, soon grew beyond expectation, and was abandoned; and on returning to 'business and books' again, sterner duties challenged attention, and the rash promise was forgotten. And now, the first anniversary of the 27th of August, has come and gone and events which the prescience of Providence could alone foresee, have broken the vows and blighted the hopes of the fond dreamers who planned an annual repetition of their adventurous pleasures. These truant lines, though incomplete, may still serve the office of friendship, if, in anywise, they shall more vividly recall to the Mystic Circle the bright lineaments of each other in the light of the golden memories of that beautiful day of pure and earnest enjoyment."

The fragment is devoted to a portrayal of the personnel of the party, but does not complete it. The women were all angels, and the men heroes. There is scarcely the eye for character that one finds in Chaucer's *Prologue*; and one feels a suspicion that the author did not finish the series of sketches because he had bankrupted his store of laudatory description. The most graphic portrait is that of the leader of the party:—

<sup>&</sup>quot;Too grave by half, yet calmly gay, A son of science led the way:

Skilled, through years of toil, to trace
The nearest line from place to place,
And quickly his steady footsteps knew
The course his practical vision drew.
All honor to the mind and heart
That dares to do the nobler part—
All honor to the brave, strong will,
That conquers but to conquer still,
And walks through life its silent way
O'er vales or mountains as they lay." (?)

The ladies of the party were all pretty much of one angelic type. The following description of one would serve with insignificant changes for all; it is "the maid of classic name and beauty":—

"She came as comes the dancing light O'er purpling hills, and rapture bright Beamed life and laughter from her face And form of loveliness and grace. Nor purer glowed Auroral flush Of sunlight in its sweetest blush. Than glowed her soul with thoughts that stirred The heart, by lightest smile or word. No loftier rose the mountain high Beyond the cloudlets of the sky. Than rose that soul, in thought sublime, Above the paltry things of time-Rose, brightly pure, in innocence-Majestic in its faith intense-Amid, and yet above the world, With beaming wings for Heaven unfurled."

As will be seen, our author was not without poetic skill; and had he struck a lower key and discriminated his characters better, he might have given us a complete poem of interest—a fitting memorial of what must have been a delightful tramp to the mountains.

James Barron Hope.—James Barron Hope has a well-founded claim to be regarded as the poet laureate of the Old Dominion. It can hardly be claimed that he had the highest gifts; but no other of her singers was called on so often to grace important anniversary and dedicatory occasions. Indeed, the larger part, and the best part, of A Wreath of Virginia Bay Leaves is made up of memorial odes, all which are pitched in a noble key.

The poet sprang from a worthy ancestry. He was born at the home of his grandfather Commodore James Barron, who at that time was commander of the Gosport Navy Yard. His mother was a typical gentlewoman of the old school. His father was a talented man, whose large estate bordered the waters of Hampton Roads. Thus his early surroundings, which in the judgment of Plato and Aristotle count for so much, were in an atmosphere of wealth and culture.

He received his preparatory education in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and afterwards entered William and Mary College, where he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1847. After a brief term of service in the United States Navy, he settled at Hampton, where in 1856 he was elected commonwealth's attorney. The year following he married Miss Annie Beverly Whiting—a union that proved to be a very happy one.

He early established a reputation as a poet, and at the time of his marriage was a favorite contributor to the Southern Literary Messenger. In 1857 the Lippincotts brought out a volume of poems entitled Leoni di Monota and Other Poems, most of which had previously appeared in periodicals. The volume was favorably received by the critics, and the Charge at Balaklava in particular called forth favorable comparisons with Tennyson's celebrated poem on the same subject. Though lacking in concentrated energy of thought and purpose, it contains spirited stanzas. The order for the expected charge, for example, had at length been given:—

"Now the fevered spell is broken,
Every man feels twice as large,
Every heart is fiercely leaping,
As a lion roused from sleeping,
For they know they will be sweeping
In a moment to the charge.

"Brightly gleam six hundred sabres,
And the brazen trumpets ring;
Steeds are gathered, spurs are driven,
And the heavens widely riven
With a mad shout upward given,
Scaring vultures on the wing."

The same year he was poet at the 250th anniversary of the English settlement at Jamestown. The ode he recited on that occasion is largely a solemn elegy on the vanished "race of kings." It contains a fitting tribute to Pocahontas, the sound of whose name suggests "the image of a saint":—

"Had I the power, I'd reverently describe
That peerless maid—'the pearl of all her tribe,'
As evening fair, when coming night and day
Contend together which shall wield its sway."

In 1858 he recited a *Memorial Ode* at the unveiling of Crawford's statue of Washington in the Capitol Square at Richmond. It has a lofty, patriotic tone, but with "the prophet's faculty" the poet touches on existing dangers, and prays,—

"That God will banish those portentous clouds, Suggesting perils in their warlike shape."

During the War between the States, the danger of which he had foreseen, our author served as captain and quartermaster in the Confederate army. After the end of the great struggle, he went to Norfolk and entered upon a journalistic career, in which he achieved distinction and acquired a wide influence. In 1881 he was chosen by Congress to be the poet of the Yorktown Cen-

tennial. The metrical address recited on that occasion, entitled Arms and the Man, represents, perhaps, his highest poetic achievement. It traverses, in brief lyrical outbursts, the leading facts of colonial history, and the striking incidents of the battle at Yorktown. Its spirit of loyal devotion to the Union is shown in The Flag of the Republic:—

"Float out, O flag, and float in every clime!
Float out, O flag, and blaze on every sea!
Float out, O flag, and float as long as Time
And space themselves shall be!

"Float out, O flag, above a smiling Land!
Float out, O flag, above a peaceful sod!
Float out, O flag, thy staff within the hand
Beneficent of God!"

The concluding lyric of the metrical address, *The South in the Union*, contains a prophecy which had a beautiful fulfilment in the war with Spain:—

"And so this day
To you I say—
Speaking for millions of true Southern men—
In words that have no undertow—
I say, and say again:
Come weal or woe,
Should the Republic ever fight,
By land or sea,
For present law, or ancient right,
The South will be
As was that lance, '
Albeit not found
Hid underground,
But in the forefront of the first advance!"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>A reference to the spear with which, according to legend, Christ's side was pierced, and which, afterwards found buried untarnished, brought victory to those who fought against the infidel in one of the Crusades.

Once more, when the corner-stone of a monument to Robert E. Lee was to be laid, James Barron Hope was invited to grace the ceremonies with an ode. He prepared an ardent eulogy of the great Virginian, but was destined not to read it; for the day after the poem was completed, he suddenly passed away, September 15, 1887.

The Lee Memorial Ode, which was read by William Gordon McCabe, has been much praised. But whether it was the absence of painstaking revision or the hand of mortal illness upon the poet, it does not seem equal to his best achievement. Among the other poems worthy of mention are A Story of Caracas, a romantic narrative of a hair-breadth escape, Three Summer Studies, which are vivid in their portraiture, and Our Heroic Dead, which concludes with these lines:—

"That past is now like an Arctic Sea
Where the living currents have ceased to run,
But over that past the fame of Lee
Shines out as 'the midnight sun':
And that glorious Orb, in its march sublime,
Shall gild our graves till the end of time!"

The themes on which our poet exercised his gifts were usually of a large and elevated character. He met them with a fitting fervor and dignity of thought and expression. There is an almost utter absence of mysticism. He is clear, concrete, and affluent in his diction and imagery—one of the best of Virginia singers.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## Poets from 1895 to 1900

Benjamin Sledd.—The author of From Cliff and Scaur and The Watchers of the Hearth is a native of Bedford County, and a graduate of Washington and Lee University. Though he has been a professor of English in Wake Forest College, N. C., for nearly twenty years, recollections of his childhood home and his native State occasionally creep into his verse:—

"Still stands—shall ever stand— Unchanged, unchangeable, each mighty steep, And vale and stream their olden beauty keep— Sure witnesses from the Creator's hand Of favoring love to thee, my own dear native land!"

The scholarly life of Professor Sledd is clearly reflected in his verse. His study of the masters of English song, among whom one suspects that Tennyson and Browning are favorites, has given a fine literary quality to his lyrics. He has a delicate artistic sense of diction and form; and yet, though he always maintains a high level, he rarely reaches the trembling summits of final, perfect expression.

In his first volume From Cliff and Scaur, published in 1897, the prevailing tone is elegiac. The tragedy of life, in which love, death, and ghostly apparitions are of frequent appearance, is represented in such poems as A Ballad of Otter Hill, A Ballad of Merriway Place, The Lay of Helgi, and Young Clifford's Bride. There is an evident fondness for the heroic figures of old Norse mythology, and Odin, Balder, and the Norns are met with more than once. Eldred is a strong blank-verse poem describing the sad withdrawal of the Titan deities of Teutonic

paganism before "that strange god whose symbol is the cross":—

"And on a day came from the sea a cloud Like some vast creature of the primal deeps, Rolling its formless bulk among the hills And blasting with its breath forest and field. In burning folds it wrapped the recreant land And hid the sun and made at noon deep night. Then rose from ruined shrine and sacred tree Lamentings in the gloom, as of a folk Who go from kin and land, and come no more."

Professor Sledd has a strong mystical sense. The spirit world has reality for him; he catches the beauty in stream and forest that escapes the common eye; and, as for Wordsworth, nature has for him mysterious voices and messages of wisdom. Hence, as he tells us in the pleasing sonnet *Among the Laurel*, he finds it—

"Sweet to lie
Under these boughs on long, still summer days
And, while the hours with noiseless feet go by,
To watch with drowsy, unsuspected gaze,
And learn of Life a thousand secret ways,
And mysteries undreamed of earth and sky."

This mystical sense, which is generally associated with a delicate fiber of muscle and brain, is strikingly shown in the two stanzas composing My Silent Guest:—

"In the lone night she comes
And clasps her hand in mine;
We speak not: silence has
A language more divine.

"Day with its weary strife,
Night with its gloom, forgot:
Soul and soul are wandering
Where day and night come not."

The last two extracts are taken from the later volume *The Watchers of the Hearth* (1902), the songs of which are less artificial than those of *From Cliff and Scaur*. In these later lyrics Professor Sledd has spoken more directly from his heart. Hence we find tender memories, which possess an autobiographic interest. There is a fond dwelling on things that might have been. We meet with a father's solicitude, a father's love, and alas, also a father's tears for those who are no more.

Our poet does not belong to the race of great heroic singers. He does not stand in the midst of the market-places of life, and in trumpet tones proclaim great truths to an earnest, struggling nation. He does not aspire to the high vocation of the prophet. He prefers to fill a lowlier sphere with gentle music—to be numbered with those humbler poets—

"Who through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in their souls the music
Of wonderful melodies."

It may therefore be concluded that the fine sonnet *Decadence* expresses not a passing mood, but a habitual attitude of mind:—

"They weary us,—those mighty bards of old
Who sang alone of war and fateful wrong,
Their accents for our tired lives too strong,
Which all the voices of the past must hold.
And Ilion's woe, divinest tale e'er told,
Can win us not; nor Milton's seraph song:
And even he, lord of the buskined throng,
Speaks in a language harsh and overbold.

"Better in time's still, pensive noon to lie
Mid the sweet grasses, on lovely pasture slopes—
Some lowly poet's new-discovered rhymes,
A far white hamlet, with its faint-heard chimes
Murmur of youth and maiden loitering by,
And all our little world of dreams and hopes."

John B. Tabb.—John Banister Tabb was born in Amelia County, Virginia, in 1845. During the Civil War he saw service on a Confederate blockade runner, but was captured in 1864, and confined as a prisoner at Point Lookout, Md., for seven months. He afterwards studied music in Baltimore, where he taught for several years; but subsequently, after a course of study at St. Charles College and St. Mary's Seminary, he was ordained to the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. He is thus the second son—Father Ryan being the first—that Virginia has given at the same time to poetry and the Roman Catholic priesthood.

For many years Father Tabb has been professor of English at his alma mater. But his time has not been wholly engrossed by the labors of his class-room. He has contributed many poems to our leading magazines, and published several volumes of verse, among which are Lyrics and Poems, issued in 1897. These are dainty little books, which have been popular enough to require successive editions.

A striking feature of the poems in these volumes is their brevity. Many of them do not extend beyond four or eight lines, and a large part of the books consists of unsullied white paper. This brevity gives us the key to the poet's method. He is not a sculptor of heroic figures, but a carver of cameos. He seems to have learned his art, not in the affluent and magnificent school of Victor Hugo, but in the studied refinements of the Parnassians—Gautier, Banville, and Baudelaire. He does not view life at large, but fixes his gaze intently on some small object till it yields him a poetic fancy or a spiritual truth. Take, for example, the little poem, My Star:—

"Since that the dewdrop holds the star
The long night through,
Perhaps the satellite afar
Reflects the dew.

"And while thine image in my heart
Doth steadfast shine;
There, haply, in thy heaven apart
Thou keepest mine."

This little poem, exquisite in its delicate fancy and form, is a typical example of Professor Tabb's manner and style. There is a feminine delicacy in most that he has written, and a touch of distinction—at times a sort of finical artificiality—that lifts it out of the commonplace. There is no splendid weaving of tapestry, but an exquisite fashioning of filigree work. There are no trumpet calls in his poetry, but the soft, slender tones of the wind-harp—music suited to the silences of the soul.

In the verse before us there is a suggestion of the Fantastic Poets of English literature—the school that Dr. Johnson called transcendental, because of their fondness for tracing remote resemblances. Sometimes one seems to detect an echo of Carew or Waller. It frequently requires pause and reflection to trace the analogies he draws or the resemblances he works out; and at such moments of hazy perplexity, one is apt to set a new value on the virtue of simplicity. Here is the poem called The Ring:—

"Hold the trinket near thine eye, And it circles earth and sky; Place it further, and behold! But a finger's breadth of gold.

"Thus our lives, beloved, lie Ringed with love's fair boundary; Place it further, and its sphere Measures but a falling tear."

As might be expected, there is a deep religious spirit in the poems. If the author acquired his art from the later French school, he did not borrow its paganism. Sometimes the distinctive tenets of his church form the subject of his verse; but

his delicacy of feeling has the magic power to transmute even dogma into poetry. Here is his poem on *The Assumption*—just a quatrain, but containing a wealth of emotion:—

"Nor Bethlehem nor Nazareth
Apart from Mary's care;
Nor heaven itself a home for Him,
Were not His mother there."

It is thus, in very many cases, he writes a stanza, where others would have written a long poem. With him, as with no other poet, there is sometimes reason to complain of brevity; what with most is a virtue is sometimes with a him a frailty.

Professor Tabb has an evident fondness for nature, and birds and flowers, in particular, appeal to his sensitive nature. Many species of both are each honored with a separate poem—not a lengthy lyric such as Bryant or Lowell or Wordsworth would have written, but frequently a quatrain, enshrining a single thought or fancy. For example, take this quatrain To a Wood-Robin:—

"Lo, when the blooming woodland wakes
From wintry slumbers long,
Thy heart, a bud of silence, breaks
To ecstasy of song."

Our author has an admirable power of condensation. He reduces a poetic conception to its lowest terms; he presents a subject, not in its unreduced bulk, but in its essence. If this method sometimes gives a slight and artificial character to his verse—a finical over-refinement—it also at times produces felicitous results. What could be finer than the little poem *Content?* It is worth whole pages of dilute description of the blessedness of love:—

"Were all the heavens an overladen bough
Of ripened benediction lowered above me,
What could I crave, soul-satisfied as now
That thou dost love me?

"The door is shut. To each unsheltered Blessing Henceforth I say, 'Depart. What wouldst thou of me?' Beggared I am of want, this boon possessing, That thou dost love me."

Each of the volumes under consideration concludes with a number of sonnets. After the preceding study, it is needless to say that they are fashioned with artistic cunning. They have the same delicacy of touch, the same aloofness from the commonplace of thought and diction, that characterize the rest of our author's poetry. Of all the poets of Virginia, no other has given more attention to the refinements of technique, or achieved better results in polished excellence of form. Had there been, at the same time, greater largeness and freedom of thought, together with the transparent clearness of simplicity, we should be able to assign him a higher rank. But we should be thankful for our exquisite singers, as well as for our great ones.

Beverley D. Tucker.—Confederate Memorial Verses, by Beverley Dandridge Tucker, is a neat pamphlet of thirty-six pages. It is made up of brief poems celebrating events connected with Confederate leaders and achievements. Without reaching the topmost summits of poetic conception and diction, the verse is every way manly and creditable. There is strong Southern feeling pervading the poems; but at the same time, there is an absence of sectional rancor. While naturally proud of the achievements and traditions of Virginia, in which his family have borne an honorable part, the poet's breadth of culture has preserved him from provincial narrowness.

The Dedication, though in prose, is not the least poetical and touching thing in the book. "I would have my children proud," the author says, "not because their father, as a boy, wore the grey and did his lowly part, but I would have them proud of the fact that their mother, whilst yet a little maiden, daughter of a knightly soldier who rode by the side of Robert Lee and gave to the South as a free libation the blood he shared with 'the Father of his Country,' cheered the troopers who followed the plume of Ashby, and waved her little hand to greet the cannoneers of Pelham, and stood at the gate of her home and gave food and drink to the foot cavalry of Stonewall Jackson, as the tide of battle ebbed and flowed through the beautiful Valley of the Shenandoah."

The opening poem of the brochure is Robert E. Lee, and breathes the devotion felt throughout the South for that pure and high-souled leader:—

"Thou art passed, Commander, where ne'er
Is heed of the praise and the blame,
Yet resistless outrings the loud cheer
At sound of thy name."

The poem *Gettysburg* celebrates the famous charge of Pickett's division, which justly deserves a place among the great charges of the world:—

"Ah me! Ah me! the slain!
Borne down,—as beats the rain
The roses in the mire and in the stain!
Yet Pickett and his men
Charge on and charge as when
The wave breaks on the rock, yet breaks again.

"It was in vain? Ah well!
The world will stop to tell,
This is the spot where knightly Armistead fell,

And this the sacred field
Where heroes would not yield
But fell each one upon his stainless shield."

There are not a few realistic touches—too realistic for genuine poetry—in *The Days When We Followed Robert Lee*. A deeper note is struck in *Compensation*, which celebrates the Confederate dead of the University of Virginia. In the opening stanza the poet asks:—

"Was it waste when the sons, who were reared at thy side, At the beat of the drum, did not falter nor pause, And by duty were drawn, as the waves by the tide Obedient to laws?

Was it waste when they struggled, and suffered, and died For flag and for cause?"

In the last stanza the answer is given:—

"Was it waste? Nay, thy sons but translated in deed All the truths of the books of the wisest and best; They were seekers of Honor, and chose but to heed Her royal behest, And the names of the dead are the pages we read To learn of the quest."

Perhaps the most interesting poems of this collection are those addressed to other Southern singers, in which we find fitting tribute or happy characterization. As is well known, Father Ryan was "the poet laureate" of the South after the war. This fact is recognized in the following stanzas:—

"There was never a voice to utter The grief and pain of the land, Till his music awoke responsive To the tender touch of his hand. "She bowed in her desolate silence,
And mourned by the graves of her dead;
And she longed for the consolation
That comes when the tears are shed—

"Till his strains, as they fell, awakened In the soul that bent o'er the sod, New faith in the gracious designings, In the hidden purpose of God."

There is a fine tribute to James Barron Hope, and a still more elaborate appreciation of John R. Thompson, read on the occasion of the presentation of a portrait to the University of Virginia:—

"He knew the kindly art of touching hidden springs
In human hearts, and saw the good in friend and foe.
He made us pass the gates of war,
And showed the vision fair tho' far,

Of home again, and friends, of peace with healing wings,
Of all that stays and cheers when strife and hatred go."

Duval Porter.—The Lost Cause and Other Poems, by Mr. Duval Porter, appeared in Danville, Virginia, in 1897. This volume, not as carefully printed as could be desired, is divided into five parts; namely, The Lost Cause, Humor, Sentimental, Sacred Subjects, and Miscellaneous. These different classes of topics show the wide range of the author's thought and fancy. The book is dedicated to his "brethren in arms," survivors of the great civil struggle, "and to the no less heroic women, who made such unparalleled sacrifices for the sacred cause."

Part first exhibits an interesting example of the "unreconstructed rebel"—an independent and vigorous type that seems about to become extinct. The poet surrendered to overwhelming force, but experienced no regeneration in his political convictions. Hence we read in *The Lost Cause*:—

"That cause was right, the right divine,
The right of self-defense,
The right of freemen to combine
'Gainst force and false pretense.

"The cause for which our fathers fought
In Revolution days,
Our precious heritage—blood-bought—
Right then and right always."

In this part of the book are numerous brief elegies on Confederate leaders, in which the poet celebrates, among others, the virtues of Jeb Stuart, Old Jube, and Stonewall Jackson. The famous charge of Pickett's Division at Gettysburg is sung, a charge—

"Which made e'en Balaklava's day Seem tame and commonplace."

The principal poem in part second is an allegory called *The Elephant*, in which the relation of the North to the slave-trade is figuratively presented. It is tinged with the partisan feeling of *ante-bellum* days, and the Puritan New Englanders are not the subjects of flattering laudation. A few lines will give the highly seasoned flavor of the whole poem:—

"Next came a philanthropic tribe,
Which beggars language to describe;
Long, lank, and lean, and hollow-eyed,
Though indigestion long had vied
With death itself, and left within
An aching void, where bile and sin
In equal parts contrived to stay
And keep grim death alone at bay."

Other humorous pieces are Just As I Expected and Old Brother Broadtoes, whose imperious contention that "wimmen haint got no sense," was suddenly silenced by his irate spouse:—

"For right down she came with a terrible swing
Of the shovel on his old bald pate,
A very short way, as you will allow,
Of cutting off any debate."

Under the division classed as Sentimental, we find *The Poet's Wish*, in which the writer's idealism strongly asserts itself. He is not a hard-headed utilitarian, absorbed in the dull prose of commercialism, but a boldly avowed idealist, cherishing a delicate worship of the beautiful:—

"Oh, give me the wind that sighs
In soft Eolian caves;
Oh, give me the dreams that rise
Like Venus from the waves.

"I sigh for the unreal,

Bright dreams of love and grace;
I live in the ideal,

And loathe the commonplace."

We find here, too, that faith in God and man which prevents life from becoming "a vale of tears":—

"I still have faith in God and man, In woman's purity; Believe in good, do all I can, This makes life sweet to me.

"O Life, my Maker's richest boon,
As such I honor thee,
And would not die a day too soon,
For life is sweet to me."

While an author retains this beautiful faith, and rejoices in the boon of life, it is a matter of small consequence, if he have missed the gift of supreme poetic expression. The man is more than the poet; the joy of life is better than lyrical frenzy. Armistead C. Gordon.—For Truth and Freedom, published in Staunton, Virginia, in 1898, is a slender pamphlet, but it contains verse worthy of the noble theme to which it is dedicated. The author, Mr. Armistead C. Gordon, has an unusual power of high and forceful utterance. The main purpose of the little work is to celebrate the heroism of the soldiers of the Confederacy; and though he no doubt loyally accepts the issues of the great conflict, he is not blind or indifferent to the sincerity and valor with which they fought. He believes that the principles for which they contended were just:—

"No belted knight, who in his grave
Hath long since crumbled into dust,
E'er drew a blade in cause more just;
Nor hero fought a fight more brave,
A battle more august."

The ode entitled *In Memory*, and dedicated to the private soldiers and sailors of the Confederacy, is admirable in thought and expression:—

"They did their duty in leal fearless fashion
Of antique knighthood's flower, each man a knight,
Careless if Death, dividing peace from passion,
Whispering should greet them in the roar of fight,
Or life to ceaseless pain
Should lead them forth again;
Knowing that duty done is never done in vain."

Roses of Memory celebrates the famous charge of Pickett at Gettysburg. The Garden of Death sings of the high hopes with which the Civil War was entered upon, and of the disastrous but glorious results of the conflict:—

"Where are they who marched away,
Sped with smiles that changed to tears,
Glittering lines of steel and gray
Moving down the battle's way—
Where are they these many years?

"Garlands wreathed their shining swords;
They were girt about with cheers,
Children's lispings, women's words,
Sunshine and the song of birds,—
They are gone so many years."

The last poem of the pamphlet—each one has claimed its notice in turn— is *The Fostering Mother*, which was recited at the University of Virginia, June 14, 1898, at the inauguration of the new buildings which replaced those destroyed by fire three years previously. After duly celebrating the great founder of the University—

"And the eternal lesson that he taught,
'The gift of God is Freedom'"—

the poet turns to those whom the institution had sent forth "for Truth's most holy cause":—

"For Truth and Freedom! Not the nameless dead,
Who through the centuries by the Grecian sea
Sleep in the narrow pass they kept, shall shed
A nobler lustre upon Liberty
Than these heroic hearts to whom she taught
That Spartan fortitude is born of Spartan thought."

Innes Randolph.—In 1898 the *Poems* of Innes Randolph, compiled by his son, were published in Baltimore. The author, a copy of whose handsome bust illumines the fly-leaf of the volume, was a man of great versatility. He was a sculptor and musician as well as poet. Music indeed, as his son tells us, was his ruling passion, and his fondness for rippling melodies finds expression in his verse. But fortune was against him, and in spite of his versatility he never accomplished in any sphere more than a moiety of what was possible for him.

"Born and brought up in Virginia," his son says in a really

illuminating preface, "at a time when the old-fashioned narrow ideas concerning 'the pursuits proper for a gentleman' held full sway, he was not permitted to turn his attention to music, painting, sculpture, or literature, in any one of which, with proper training, he might have accomplished great things. It is also possible that even these early obstacles might have been overcome, had not the Civil War broken out at the critical moment of his life and robbed him of four of its best years."

After a residence of three or four years in Richmond following the close of the war, devoted to an uphill fight for the necessaries of life, he went to Baltimore and entered upon the practice of law. Had he given himself wholly to his profession, his talents would no doubt have brought him brilliant success. But he was drawn to the fine arts; he achieved some fame in sculpture, and acquired a noteworthy skill on the violoncello. Finally he drifted into journalism, where his versatile gifts found freer scope for their exercise, but left fewer monuments to posterity. "The newspapers of to-day," to quote again from the preface, "are like huge furnaces in which men's brains are used for fuel, giving out heat and light, it is true, while the consumption lasts, but leaving no enduring memory—merely a pinch of ashes, which is finally scattered to the winds."

The poems, most of which had not been previously printed, were written at different periods, and reflect the changes of personal experience and of national history. Those written at the close of the war and during the Reconstruction period are filled with defiant loyalty to the South. In the poet's later life the great struggle became a memory without bitterness. Torchwork is a story of the desolation wrought by Sheridan's army in the beautiful Valley of the Shenandoah. It begins with a light rippling melody, which deepens as the tragedy of devastation proceeds:—



JAMES LINDSAY GORDON



"A merry rill,

With flashing steps, comes down the hill,

Down the hill,

And, strewn with bubbles, stops to hide

And laugh its fill,

And mirror on its dimpled tide

The grass that overhangs its side;

And laughing still,

Among the rocks, it turns to glide

Down to the mill."

The mill later, as might be guessed, was to be destroyed by Sheridan's ruthless order.

A Fish Story—a parable without a moral—is intended to show the dangers of freedom to the negro. Old Ned, who goes fishing, represents the negro in slavery, and the huge drum that seizes the line attached to his ankle, typifies liberty. The results of the unfortunate adventure are presented in the closing lines of the poem:—

"They were washed ashore by the heaving tide,
And the fishermen found them side by side.
In common death, and together bound
In the line that circled them round and round,
So looped and tangled together,
That their fate was involved in a dark mystery
As to which was the catcher and which the catchee;
For the fish was hooked hard and fast by the gill,
And the darkey was lassoed around the heel,
And each had died by the other!
And the fishermen thought it could never be known,
After all their thinking and figuring,
Whether the nigger a-fishing had gone,
Or the fish had gone out a-niggering."

There is a tragedy hidden in these three simple stanzas:-

"The tips of the forest shimmer
In the glow of the saddening skies;
They seem like the parting kisses
Of summer before he flies.

"The tear-drops stand on mine eyelids,
Or lie unwept in my heart:
The scene brings back in a vision
The moment that saw us part.

"I knew we must part forever,
And saw that thine hours would be brief,
That I was departing Summer,
And thou wert the dying leaf."

Our author could write beautiful prose as well as beautiful verse. A few days before his death in 1887, after a long illness, he wrote: "Like little children tired of play, who, weary of their toys, find them out, break them, and fall asleep, is a man who feels mortal sickness upon him, and looks back upon his past life. How empty seem the toys he has played with; how paltry his little victories; how puny the things for which he gave his toil, his blood, his tears; how less still those triumphs over weaker rivals and the dripping blade that he had borne so proudly. Yes, Nature breaks these toys for us as the majesty of death—the eternal—begins to soothe our world-worn senses." Let this stand as a fitting conclusion of our review of this gifted, versatile man.

Mrs. W. C. Day.—Mrs. W. C. Day, of Danville, Va., is the author of *The Blended Flags*, which was published in 1898. The flags referred to in the title are of course the flags of the Union and Confederacy. The blending was effected by the war with Spain, in which the North and the South united in freeing

Cuba from oppression. The conception involved in the title of the book is not a bad one; for surely no other event since the close of the Civil War has done so much to allay sectional feeling.

The poems in the little volume are suggested by various incidents of the Spanish war. Remember the Maine teaches the old lesson that "the wages of sin is death." Organization which is given in full, does honor, not only to the commander, but also to the man behind the guns:—

"'Fire when you are ready!' said
The chief to his gallant crew—
The order flashed, as ship and ship
In line of battle drew.

"His record stands as calm and brave
On the eve of that conflict grand;
But remember the men were ready, when
He gave that cool command!"

Dewey and Hobson have recognition, and there is also a word of praise for the courage of the Spaniards. A more laborious apprenticeship to the poetic art—the price paid even by the most gifted for supreme excellence—would have improved the quality of the verse.

Henry Mazyck Clarkson.—We do not read far in Dr. Clarkson's Songs of Love and War without experiencing a sense of delight. Perhaps there is a feeling of pleased surprise growing out of the contrast between the sober-looking cover of the volume and the genial spirit of its contents. The author does not take himself or his work too seriously; yet his poetic skill and breadth of culture lift him far above the commonplace. His affluent versification never fails in its easy flow; and the threefold division of the poems—love, politics, and war—indicates the wide scope of his thought and interest. The interesting vol-

ume before us may be regarded as containing the obiter dicta of a broad and busy life.

The spirit of the Songs of Love and War may be gathered from the opening poem addressed to his friend, Mr. H. W. Moran:—

"You wonder, my friend, why so seldom I print
The fanciful thought which I weave into verse;
You flatter my Muse by your delicate hint
Of fame in the future, of gold in my purse:
You ask why I write, if but few are to read;
You talk of the wasting of talent and time;
I covet not fame, am accustomed to need,
And men do not offer their riches for rhyme.

Consider the lark! How he rises on wing,
And mounts to the sky, through ethereal air!
He sings as he soars; 'tis his nature to sing,
To warble his notes tho' no listener be near:
I seek not for fortune, I sigh not for fame,
I follow my Muse into forest or street;
In sorrow, in gladness, I sing all the same,
I sing because singing itself is so sweet."

Throughout the sentimental pieces there is, in addition to admirable lyrical form, a rare delicacy of thought and expression. Take a stanza, for example, from *Do you Remember?*—a poem descriptive of a lover's stroll by the banks of the Rivanna:—

"And I remember 'round your throat a bit of ancient lace,
And from your pin

A ribbon fluttering with delight whene'er it touched your face Or dimpled chin;

Another clasped your pretty waist, and both were dainty blue,

Just like your eyes—

That is—if anything God ever made could match that hue, Except the skies."

In several of the poems there is a play of humor—that sense which preserves for us a perfect sanity of judgment. When asked for a lock of his hair to braid in a "family twist," he gallantly gives it with the remark—

"I send every thread I can possibly spare, Whilst knowing each strand will be missed."

A glance at the prepossessing portrait of the author, which forms the frontispiece of the book, reveals the sincere conviction with which these lines must have been written. The same sense of humor appears in *The Thread of Gold*, which his wife finds on his shoulder—her own hair being a different hue—and in *A Lesson in Laconics*, when he was guided across a swollen stream by—

"A maid of the mountains, bare-footed and blushing."

Dr. Clarkson has a strong sense of the tragedy of life. Not infrequently his lyre is attuned to tears. A Life in Five Chapters brings before us in succession "a babe upon her mother's breast," "later on a laughing lass," then at the altar "a faultless type of finished womanhood."

"And next I saw her on her dying bed,
When life had nothing left but lees;
There was no future way she feared to tread,
Nor dreaded she Death's mysteries.

"I saw sad women with their faces hid,
As strong-armed men a coffin bore—
I heard dank clods dropped on a casket-lid,
Then, 'Dust to Dust'—and all was o'er."

There is not space to speak of the broad tolerant spirit that

breathes in Who Knows? or of the chivalrous heart that pours forth its sympathies in Woman's Work. In the political and martial poems we find a high-souled honesty and patriotism. In The Lee Statue Unveiled, we have a fine tribute to the great Southern leader. Its firm texture may be judged from the opening stanza:—

"Though Victory crowneth not thy brow,
Thou stand'st to-day, unveiled,
Type of the manliest manhood, thou,
That ever fighting, failed.
Well may'st thou hold aloft thy head;
Immortal is its crown;
And though the cause thou led'st be dead,
Deathless is thy renown!"

J. H. Booton.—Fugitive Lyrics, by John Heiskell Booton, appeared in Salem, Va., in 1899. As indicated in this thin volume, Mr. Booton has the gift of poetic utterance. He does not dwell on deep or mystic themes, and the sweep of his muse has not, up to this time, been very wide. But his best efforts are characterized by a delicacy of fancy and a grace of expression that are at once pleasing and full of promise. His poetic effusions have hitherto been an agreeable diversion and exercise—the flittings of a bird as it makes trial of its newly discovered powers. But should he hereafter recognize poetry as a vocation or seriously set himself to the voicing of a great message, it would be in his power to add lustre to the future annals of Virginia poetry.

While many of Mr. Booton's poems deal with fanciful situations, such as a *Sylvan Nocturne*, *Alma*, and *Abendlied*, there is now and then a strain that issues from the heart. In the brief lyric called *Song*, his love of nature, in its beautiful forms in the Valley of Virginia, is revealed in unwonted power. To

him the laurels of song and the plaudits of the marveling multitude are not equal to the charm of mountain cliffs and woodland minstrelsy:—

"Take me back to where the granite boulders glisten; Let me breathe again the fragrance of the pine; Let me lie among the bending ferns and listen To the minstrels perched upon the pendant vine.

Let my spirit breathe the grandeur of the mountain; Let me hear the breezes whisper when they blow; Let me listen to the flowing of the fountain, And the falling of the waters far below."

A Girl of To-day and When Cupid Holds the Lines are in lighter vein. The moral of the former is, that the arch and alluring ways of the coquette are not to be taken too much to heart:—

"There are too many others to grieve, my love, Far too many others to grieve."

And as to the latter,—

"So let life run where'er it may,
And ill be fate's designs;
The roughest road's a pleasant way,
When Cupid holds the lines."

As representing the author's poetic gifts at their best, we quote entire his *New Year Nocturne*, which was written at the close of 1898, and contains a reference to the war with Spain:—

"A wind moves through the night
On wings that shiver—
On icy wings through pearly chill moonlight,
Beyond the stars that glisten weirdly bright,
Away forever.

"On icy wings that shed the downy snows
The spirit flees,
Bearing away to the vales where Lethe flows
The vanished year red with a myriad woes,

"And unto Thee, whose love will bid the snows
To melt, and cleanse the earth of gore,
O Prince of Peace, we pray that Sharon's rose
May in the valleys of our hearts repose

Untrampled evermore."

Leaving us peace.

William Dudley Powers.—Mr. Powers is the author of *Uncle Isaac*, or Old Days in the South, which appeared in Richmond in 1899. The general purpose of this volume, as might be inferred from the alternative title, is to picture the poetic side of old Southern life. This is first done in an introductory essay in prose, in which we have a pleasing picture of ante-bellum feudalism. "There were vassals," we are told, "but the vassal was loved by the lord of the manor. The lady, so refined and gentle that the caste feeling was forgotten, met and touched and spoke to those who must come and go at her bidding in such manifest friendship that the tie which bound them one to the other was that of affection rather than that of ownership."

The poetic part of the book, covering nearly two hundred pages, consists of thirteen cantos, in which Uncle Isaac gives his Christmas recollections, describes the day "when Marse Ran' got kilt," laments the passing away of the old time religion, and dwells on other kindred themes. The poem, written in unmitigated negro dialect, employs the unusual iambic heptameter line. The following extract, in which Uncle Isaac takes a rather pessimistic view of things, will serve for illustration:—

"De times is changed, Marse Charley, an' de worl' ain't gwine las' long,

De peoples got to projectin' an' doin' things dat's wrong. Dey's lef' deir nat'rul bus'nes an' is tryin' to take a han' In doin' de Almighty's work an' managin' His plan."

## CHAPTER XIX

## Poets from 1900 to 1907

Benjamin C. Moomaw.—Songs in the Night is a pamphlet volume of some fifty-odd pages, the author of which is Mr. Benjamin C. Moomaw, of Covington, Va. It was published in 1900, and designed for private circulation among the author's friends. Its thirty lyrics are the fruitage of thought rather than of fancy, and express the poet's views of various phases of individual and social life. The prevailing tone is religious; many of the themes are suggested by Scripture passages, and the closing pages are devoted to hymns of average excellence. It would have been better for the verse, had the author been able to look on the world and life with larger sympathies.

On May 13, 1907, the author delivered the Tercentenary poem at the Jamestown Exposition. As is shown by his ode entitled *Freedom's Empire* in the work before us, he is capable of comprehensive thought and forceful expression. He is deeply impressed by the obvious destiny of America, which, as the land of freedom, "bears the world's great hope within her breast." He recognizes, in spite of its years of terror and despair, the providential results of the Civil War.

"But lo! from out that carnival of strife
Sprang freedom's world to yet more glorious life,
Winged for the flight sublime of centuries to come."

Mr. Moomaw, whose principal field of activity has been the world of affairs, has found in poetry only a pleasurable avocation. A strong literary impulse seems to lie behind his poetical activity—an impulse that has triumphed over the toils and per-

plexities of business. The verse that springs from this inner necessity will always have at least the virtue of sincerity. But the poet does not make any high claim for his "unpretentious lays":—

"If but the least they help to lift A single soul into the light—
If but a lantern in the night,—
'Tis not in vain, my humble gift."

The poem It is I is a graphic picture of the well-known scene on the sea of Galilee. A Thought is a brief-treatment of the theme of Paradise lost and regained. The Bethlehem Song is an expansion of the angelic chorus of "peace on earth, good will to men." In the Passage of the Red Sea, the story of Exodus is told with fine pictorial effect until at last—

"The flower of Egypt sleeps beneath the wave."

These few successive titles from the first part of the Songs in the Night will give some idea of the poet's prevailing range and tone.

Two or three times Mr. Moomaw falls into the vein of irony and satire. This feature of his work is best represented in *The Church of the Select*, which portrays a fashionable congregation on "Tony Avenue." The poem does ample justice to the choir, which rendered "the songs of Zion with the up-to-datest art," as also to the clergyman, who represented "the latest, brightest pattern of the seminary brand." The preacher's views of sin were toned down to a point not to offend the sensibilities of his congregation; and—

"He touched on hell at intervals, a dilettante touch; It was an isolation for vulgar folks, and such. Nice people in the other world would never have to meet The very common kind who live on Population street. "Twas voted that he fully proved his proposition fair;
The Bible says that but a few shall be elected there.

'Tis true the Book has lately shown a rather doubtful light,
But then, admitted it must be, in some things it is right."

There is a good deal of wholesome truth in *Proverbs*. A few are quoted:—

- "The hidden life may yet be richly sown:
  "Tis better to be loved than to be known,
- "To all who boast of a superior creed:
  A godly life is still the greatest need.
- "Learn thou this lesson in the world's vain strife: Love is the solace of this earthly life."

There is space for but one more illustrative passage. It is taken from the poem *Courage*, which teaches the important lesson of faith, strength, and heroism. The poet no doubt speaks out of the fulness of his own experience.

- "Bear a firm soul amid the woes
  Which hem the troubled spirit round.
  Behold, on this contested ground
  We win the empire of the stars."
- 'Be strong in faith, for in that strength We conquer all the brood of cares. It is the wavering faith which wears The courage out of life, at length."

We understand that Mr. Moomaw is soon to publish another and larger volume of poetry. No doubt it will show a wider range of subject and a more finished grace of style. The serious purpose and earnest moral tone of *Songs in the Night* may well serve as a prologue to higher achievement.

Dr. Quarles.—Dr. James A. Quarles is widely known as a philosopher and preacher. Before his call to Washington and Lee University in 1886 as professor of philosophy, he had filled prominent pulpits in the Presbyterian church. He is not unknown as a writer of prose; for besides his contributions to periodical literature, he is the author of a Life of F. T. Kemper, which appeared in 1884. What is not commonly known is his divagation into the fields of poetry; for he has concealed his identity under the euphonious pseudonym of "Dunlora," and has not allowed the biographical dictionaries to mention his efforts.

Yet there is no ground for this concealment further than the gentle odium that is too apt, in this prosaic age, to be attached to the poetic character. The Via Dolorosa, printed in Louisville in 1900, is a condensed epic, the conception and craftsmanship of which are altogether commendable. The general theme, namely, the redemption of man, has been treated by Milton, Pollok, and others; but nowhere else, not even in Paradise Regained, is the discussion so compact. With venturesome flight, the poem describes what took place in Heaven when God proclaimed that man might be saved through the vicarious death of another:—

"The word was scarcely spoken, ere from his Own side, the right hand of his throne, uprose The Son of God, and pledged himself to bear The punishment of death on earth in place Of guilty man. Archangel, cherubim, And seraphim, with mute amazement heard."

Then follows a succinct account of the life of Christ on earth, closing with the scene on Calvary, the resurrection, and ascension. The distinctive feature of the poem is indicated in the alternative title, *The Travail of Christ's Soul*. The redemptive

efficacy of Christ's vicarious suffering is found, not in the torture of the flesh, but in the agony of the spirit.

The closing lines, descriptive of Christ's return to the heavenly city, portray a sublime scene:—

"Past moons, and worlds, and suns, He rises, till he nears the pearly gates. The angels shout, 'Lift up your heads, O gates; Be lifted up, ve everlasting doors: And the King of glory shall come in.' Who Is this King of glory? The Son of God most high, The Lord, the Christ: mighty to save the soul Of man. The angels form in serried ranks To greet him back. The spirits of the just, Made perfect by his grace, their golden crowns Cast at his feet, and chant the pæan grand, 'The Lamb that hath been slain most worthy is Of all the power, riches, wisdom, might, And honor, glory, blessing,' God himself With open arms receives the glorious King, Who gave his soul for man; and by his side He seats him: Gracious Lord of HEAVEN AND EARTH. REDEEMER OF MANKIND."

Robert Whittet.—Robert Whittet is a son of Scotland; and though resident for many years in Virginia, "yet the recollections of the old home and the friends there are very dear," he says, "and the idiom of his boyhood still remains the most expressive." It is safe to say that the best verse in The Bright Side of Suffering and Other Poems is in the Scottish dialect; several of them remind us of Burns, and would do the great Scottish lyrist no discredit. Take, for example, My Jeanie:—

"Oh! pure as day was Jeanie's heart,
And sae, I trow, thocht mony mair;
And ilk ane strave wha'd hae the art
To win my darling Jeanie fair;

But little wist they wha she lo'ed,—
To whom she'd gi'en that heart awa,—
To whom her gentle lips had vowed,
To lo'e him best amang them a'.

"Oh! beauty's time's aft quickly run—
Just like a gleam o' golden licht
Dashed frae the glowin' autumn sun,
Ere sinks he in the mirk o' nicht;
But she has beauty o' her ain—
'Twould quell a weight o' saddening cares;
'Tis mair than warlds o' gowden grain,
For beauty o' the soul is hers."

We are reminded, too, of Burns in the gentle, tolerant spirit of Foibles:—

"What though a chiel may ance do wrang,
Will ye mend him wi' yer clatter?
Rumor oftener adds a whang
Than a' it does to mend a matter.
Then when a word is said unkind,
Let's try to check a' useless rallin';
It is a maxim gude to mind,
That ilka body has their failin.'"

The title poem of the volume mentioned is, as its name indicates, an elaborate discussion of the brighter aspects of suffering. It is written in the usual didactic measure—iambic pentameter—and covers nearly two hundred and fifty pages. It is divided into seven parts as follows: 1. Suffering in nature; 2. National liberty a fruit of suffering; 3. Suffering in the individual man; 4. Suffering in individual experience; 5. Suffering in individual experience continued; 6. The highest conception of suffering; and 7. A summary. The conclusion of the whole matter is given in lyric form at the close:—

"I would not weary in the path of life,

Though thickly strewn with thorns of care;

Nor falter, though the warfare's rugged strife

May make me pain and sorrow share.

"I know that every step from day to day
Has been arranged of God for me;
And that, 'mid all the troubles of the way,
I may to him as to a Father flee."

In 1900 appeared Sonnets, Mostly on Scripture Themes, with a Few Other Poems. The occasion and purpose of the Sonnets are explained in the preface. They "were originally written in illustration of some thought embodied in the International Sunday-school Lessons, as they passed in review week after week, and were published in The Earnest Worker, a magazine for Sunday-school teachers issued by the Committee of Publication of the Presbyterian Church, South. Appearing in scattered form, and attached severally to the lesson of the day, they never elicited much notice, and now, collected together, no very appreciative acceptance is expected for them; and yet so collected, it is hoped, as the phalanx is more powerful than the skirmishing line, they may find a fuller welcome from former friends and readers when met with in a new dress."

There are two hundred and thirty-seven of the sonnets—the largest number ever published by a Virginia poet. The manner in which the subjects were fixed, did not, in many cases, leave much room for freedom and inspiration. The sonnnets are generally constructed with skill; yet, in spite of the author's defense, this artificial form of verse has sometimes led him into a dilution of thought and diffuseness of style that are enfeebling and unartistic. The following, based on the text, "There went out a fame of him," is one of the clearest and best:—

"Ambition's sons are oft mistaken men,
And lay foundation for a world-wide name
On deeds of rapine or of blood-bought fame;
But 'tis in paths of peace the noblest gain
The brightest chaplets; 'tis heart more than brain
To which the world awards its best acclaim;
'Tis deeds of love and service that inflame
The lasting praise history lets remain
Upon her page; the heroes in life's fight—
Those who are dearest and loved the most—
Are those who've suffered in the cause of right,
And done it simply, without claim or boast!
So do thy deeds of grace, Lord Jesus, shine,
And o'er the world there is no fame like thine"

Sallie S. Cotten.—The White Doe, by Sallie Southall Cotten, is a poetic rendering of the story of Raleigh's tragic colony on Roanoke Island in 1587, and of the beautiful legend which sprang from its mysterious disappearance. It was on this island that the first child of English parentage was born in the New World. She was named Virginia Dare, and was the granddaughter of John White, the governor of the colony.

Not long after the founding of the colony, Governor White returned to England to obtain additional supplies. England was threatened with invasion by the Spanish Armada; and the queen needing and demanding his service, it was three years before he could return to Roanoke. His colony had disappeared; and the only clue to its fate was the word *Croatoan*, which he found carved on a tree. The fate of the colony is a mystery, which historic records have not fully solved.

"From recent search into the subject by students of history," to use the words of our author in her elaborate preface, "a chain of evidence has been woven from which it has come to be believed that the lost colony, hopeless of succor from England, and deprived of all other human associations, became a part of

a tribe of friendly Croatoan Indians, shared their wanderings, and intermarried with them, and that their descendants are to be found to-day among the Croatoan Indians of Robeson County, North Carolina."

But tradition has come to the aid of authentic history. There is a legend that tells us that the colony, threatened by hostile savages, found refuge among a tribe of friendly Indians, where Virginia Dare grew into fair maidenhood and moved as an inspiration and blessing. At length, by the sorcery of a rejected and treacherous lover, she was changed into a white doe, which roamed the island with a charmed life. Finally true love triumphed over magic and restored her to human form, but at the same moment she died from a silver arrow with which a cruel chieftain had pierced her heart. Such in brief is the substance of the legend and the poem.

In the "Prologue," which is a brief but fitting overture, the keynote of the poem is found:—

"In the tomb of vanished ages sleep the ungarnered truths of Time, Where the pall of silence covers deeds of honor and of crime; Deeds of sacrifice and danger, which the careless earth forgets, There, in ever deepening shadows, lie embalmed in mute regrets."

Under *The Seeds of Truth* there is a description of "Roanoke, 1587," where—

"Shimmering waters, aweary of tossing, Hopeful of rest, ripple on to the shore; Dimpling with light, as they waver and quiver, Echoing faintly the ocean's wild roar"—

together with a versified presentation of such facts as have been authentically transmitted.

Then follows The Legend of the White Doe in six brief divisions as follows: 1. The refugees; 2. The pale-face maiden; 3. Savage sorcery; 4. The counter charm; 5. The hunt; 6. The silver

arrow. The story is well told in trochaic octosyllabic verse, suggesting Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, but without the latter's repetitions. The following lines from the opening of the third canto will show the skill and charm with which the story is told:—

"Man-to-ac, the Mighty Father, When he filled the earth with blessings. Deep within the heart of Woman Hid the burning Need-of-Loving; Which through her should warm the ages With a flame of mutual feeling, Throbbing through her sons and daughters With a force beyond their power. And this law of human loving. Changeless through unending changes. Fills each loving heart with yearning For another heart to love it: And against this ceaseless craving, Creed, nor clime, nor color standeth: Heart to heart all nature crieth. That the earth may thrill with gladness.

"Brave O-kis-ko loved the maiden With a love which made him noble: With the love that self-forgetting Fills the soul with higher impulse. As the sun with constant fervor. Heat and light to earth bestowing. Seeks for no return of blessing. Feels no loss for all his giving,-So O-kis-ko loved Wi-no-na, Gave her all his heart's rude homage. Felt no loss for all his giving, Loved her for the joy of loving. Scorned he all fatigue and danger Which would bring her food or pleasure; And each day brought proof of fealty, For his deeds were more than language.

"His endeavor pleased the maiden,
And her eyes beamed kindly on him,
Though no passion stirred her pulses.
For sweet maiden hopes and fancies
Filled her life with happy dreaming,
Ere her woman's heart awakened
To O-kis-ko's patient waiting.
Waiting for her eyes to brighten
'Neath the ardor of his glances;
Waiting for her soul to quicken
With the answer to his longing;
Finding sweet content in silence,
Glad each day to see and serve him."

Miss Glasgow.—Miss Ellen Glasgow is a native of Richmond. In 1902 she published a dainty volume of verse called *The Freeman and Other Poems*, which is not unworthy of her excellent ability. While her poetry is evidently subordinate to her main literary vocation, which has given us several notable novels, it exhibits a careful and conscientious art. It avoids two weaknesses with which a considerable part of Virginia verse is chargeable: it is neither imitative nor commonplace. From the artistic side it exemplifies the finished and independent style characteristic of the best poetry of to-day.

The range of subjects is not large, nor do the different tones unite in forming one vast and varied harmony. But the gaze of the poet has gone beneath the surface of life, and has fathomed some of the deepest emotions of the human heart. She has a keen sense of human folly and injustice. In the little poem Fame, we read:—

"In life he lived among them and they cast
Him stones for bread;
He that was mightiest of them all had not
Whereon to lay his head.

"In death, where flaming poppies fired the dust,
They brought a laurel wreath:
Honor to ashes on the coffin lid!
Fame to the skull beneath."

The same trenchant indictment of the world's heartlessness is found in the poem of three stanzas called *Justice*.

The dominant spirit of the book is a virile stoicism, which pervades a majority of the poems. The poem A Prayer, which begins with the cry,—

"Grant me but courage, Lord,"

concludes in a tone of rather reckless and unbecoming levity:-

"Thus when the end draws near,
With lifted head let me the potion quaff,
And so—as one who never learned to fear—
Pass on to meet Thy judgment with a laugh."

The stoicism of despair is splendidly portrayed in the title poem *The Freeman*, the theme of which is contained in the prefatory quotation, "Hope is a slave, Despair is a freeman":—

"A vagabond between the East and West,
Careless I greet the scourging and the rod;
I fear no terror any man may bring,
Nor any god.

"The clankless chains that bound me I have rent,
No more a slave to hope I cringe or cry;
Captives to Fate, men rear their prison walls,
But free am I.

"I tread where arrows press upon my path,
I smile to see the danger and the dart;
My breast is bared to meet the slings of hate,
But not my heart.

"I face the thunder and I face the rain,
I lift my head, defiance far I fling—
My feet are set, I face the autumn as
I face the spring.

"Around me, on the battle-fields of life,

I see men fight, and fail, and crouch in prayer;

Aloft I stand unfettered, for I know

The freedom of despair."

The attitude of Miss Glasgow to the universe is that of "a hunter after truth." Her aspirations, if not her beliefs, go considerably beyond our creeds. She is unwilling to prove a traitor to her faithful dog,—

"Or prize a heaven that he could never know."

She has given us a glimpse of her faith in the poem A Creed:—

"In truth that falsehood cannot span,
In the majestic march of Laws,
That weed and flower and worm and man
Result from One Supernal Cause,
In doubts that dare and faiths that cleave,
Lord, I believe."

All this will be recognized as a vigorous but unusual note in Virginia song.

Samuel M. Firey.—The *Poems* of Samuel M. Firey, of Roanoke, Virginia, were written as "a Lethe to the languor of old age." The author expresses his sympathy with *The Last Minstrel*, who found in "the harp his sole remaining joy." As he tells us further in his preface, the poems "were not begun with a view to publication. Delight grew with the work, and the poems likewise. At length the desire rose that they be not

wholly lost; that the sentiments therein might be perpetuated, and the places loved might live in song." He had the sweet satisfaction of discovering and developing an unsuspected lyrical faculty.

The poet does not cherish the heresy of "art for art's sake." We look in vain for that faultless perfection of rhythm, rhyme, and diction, which follow an exaggerated reverence for form. In the volume before us, thought is more than form, and sentiment is more than thought. "The heart is a function higher than the head," says the preface, "and the things thereof must be uppermost, or a people is sure to degenerate in moral sense." The poems are all brief lyrics, and cover a considerable range; but everywhere there is a strong moral sentiment—the tone of an upright soul. In the poem  $My\ Harp$ , the author says:—

"Nor will it dive into folly's realm,
To bring up slime for the jests of men;
Or stoop to flatter the rich and great,
To win applause, or gain estate."

As is natural in advancing years, there is a frequent recurrence to the scenes of childhood and youth. The Old Mill, The Old Sycamore, and the Old School Ground are filled with precious memories. In Long Ago we read:—

"We visit the brook we used to wade,
The trees that gave us the playhouse shade,
The meadow where barefoot boys we played
In green Old Long Ago.

"The garden hedged with its fruits and flowers, The wildwood deep with its arching bowers, And dripping sweet with the vernal showers, Of balmy Long Ago."

There are many such lyrics—unsung it may be—in the bosoms of us all, as the silver begins to steal into our locks.

In Mr. Firey's poems we recognize a strong love for the beauties of nature. Spring, The Stars, October, and many other poems dwell on the charms of earth and sky. With Wordsworth he holds that Nature is a great teacher, and that its lofty cliffs and whispering trees often have a higher message for the human soul than that of books. In The Wood, he says:—

"'Tis wise to turn betimes away, into the pleasant wood, In nature's courts to spend a day, in cheerful solitude; 'Tis sweet to banish grief and care, anxiety and pride, And sit down like a hermit there, some falling stream beside;

"And watch the careless ripples go, adown the rocky bed,
And hear the murmurs far below, and music overhead;
The jay and thrush amid the trees, the partridge from the ground,
Pour their gay songs upon the breeze, till all the groves resound."

In the volume before us, *Mill-Mountain*, which had hitherto remained unsung, is duly celebrated. It is from the base of this mountain that the clear stream, aptly called Crystal Spring, bursts forth, from which the city of Roanoke derives its principal supply of water.

"Mill-Mountain, thy lesson, O be it not lost!
May we from the shadow, the storm, and the frost,
Come mellowed and golden; and smit by the rod,
Give streams that shall gladden the City of God—
May build to the truth, o'er the dust of decay,
A pillar to stand, while the worlds pass away."

Our author is a friend of education; but at the same time he recognizes and deplores the error of an over-crowded course of instruction. The physical needs of our children should not be disregarded; and by a sacrifice of health and a neglect of the moral sense, learning may be too dearly bought:—

"Knowledge, yea; but cramming, nay! Give the cheerful boy his play; Knowledge is not all of schools—Many graduated fools!"

A considerable part of the volume is taken up with poems on Scripture themes. They are usually metrical versions of the sacred narrative, to which they adhere so closely that there has been but little room for the play of poetic fancy or the novelties of higher criticism.

Carter W. Wormley.—Mr. Carter W. Wormley, a young journalist of Richmond, is the author of a neat volume which bears the simple title *Poems*. It contains some forty lyrics of occasionally luxuriant measure, in which one catches sometimes an echo of Poe. Here is the closing stanza of *Shadows of the Lake*—a significant symbolistic poem:—

"In oblivion's dominion,
Shadowed by the plume
Of a wounded fiend, whose pinion,
Drooping pinion, sheds its gloom,
Lies encradled in its Horror that dim lake,
Where the moonbeams stretched as pallid fears which tremble
but ne'er break."

The poems, which show a thorough acquaintance with the laws of versification, reveal a wide range of sympathy. There is tenderness in such poems as Come,  $Little\ Girl$  and  $To\ a\ Bayou\ Lily$ ; there is compassion with the unfortunate in  $Judge\ Not$ ,  $A\ Ballad\ of\ Burdens$ , and  $Fortune's\ Flag$ ; there is appreciation of duty quietly but heroically done in  $Bill\ Cranton$  and the  $Burial\ of\ Officer\ A$ —. Though these poems are not charged with an impressive power of thought and diction—a quality usually acquired only in the long and hard schooling of life—they do

credit to the poet's mind and heart. They make pleasant reading for a quiet half-hour.

As representative of Mr. Wormley's poetry at its best, the brief lyric *Evening*, which will be read with interest both for its description of a vesper seashore, and its subtle symbolism of life, is given in full:—

"I stood at sunset by the solemn sea And hearkened to its serious refrain; The sad and muffled murmurs of the main, Sounding their anthem to eternity.

"The dusk of twilight dimmed the weary world,
I lingered yet, though shadows darker fell;
When, at my foot, half buried, lay a shell,
And in its bosom beauty smiled impearled.

"In golden youth my soul began a quest Of happiness, distinction, of renown; I lingered yet, though shadows darker fell; When darkness brought its guerdon, and I rest."

The poems of this volume are "lovingly dedicated to the little woman who is now my wife;" and she has good reason to be proud of them. We cannot close this review without joining in the prayer of the dedicatory lines:—

"His benediction gently furl
Its wings above thy fate,
And angels guard the little girl
Who weighs but ninety-eight."

Miss Kathleen DonLeavy.—Miss Kathleen DonLeavy, the author of a *Bunch of Flowers*, was brought up in Richmond, where she was educated in St. Joseph's Academy. A taste for writing early introduced her to the columns of the religious and the secular press. Later she established and

edited *The Catholic Friend*, which, as might be inferred from its name, was zealously devoted to the interests of the Roman Catholic Church. After nearly five years, during which the paper made many friends in Virginia and other States, its publication was suspended because of the failing health of its hopeful and enterprising founder.

To a sensitive nature, which is keenly alive to all forms of beauty, the transition from prose to poetry is at times natural and almost inevitable. We are not surprised, therefore, that Miss DonLeavy found pleasure in weaving her thoughts and feelings—not always as smoothly and perfectly as could be wished—into verse. The results of her poetic efforts are gathered into an attractive volume entitled a Bunch of Flowers. It is reverently dedicated to His Holiness Pope Pius X.—"our King, our Father, our Beloved"—and it had the good fortune to gain papal recognition and to secure the authoress the apostolic blessing.

A strong moral and religious tone pervades the brief lyrics—nearly a hundred in number—which compose the Bunch of Flowers. The mission of the book, to use the writer's own words, "is to give substantial expression to our life's highest ideal—the beautiful, the good, and the true—and its proceeds will cheerfully befriend good literature, which, like our Divine Master—the only real embodiment of the beautiful, good, and true—is so sadly depreciated in this, our wondrous age of boasted 'progress.'"

A considerable number of the poems—The Immaculate Conception, My Rosary, The Assumption, and some others—are devoted to themes connected with the peculiar beliefs and usages of the church to which the poet belongs. By the devout Catholic these doctrinal or ecclesiastical poems may be read with interest and edification; but it can hardly be claimed that they embody a high degree of poetic excellence. Indeed only poetic

genius of extraordinary power can lift ecclesiastical dogma into the upper regions of song. As a rule, dogma is a weight that confines the flight of the Muses dangerously near the levels of prose. But in the case of Miss DonLeavy, whose religious earnestness is everywhere apparent, the gratification of the artistic sense is far less an object than the strengthening of Christian faith.

Our authoress is at her best in describing nature and portraying the ordinary experiences of life. Though she has not aspired after the broad outlook on the world met with in the great masters of song, she has sometimes given pleasing expression to experiences that have come to us all. Here is her little poem on *Heart Music*, in sentiment and metrical form one of the best in the book:—

"Sweet is the fragrance of flowers,

The song of the murmuring rill,

Sunlight gilding morning hours,

And the moonlight o'er the hill.

"Sweeter than sun and moon above
Purling brook and fragrant flowers,
Are eyes that look on us with love,
And smiles that answer ours.

"Sweet is the minstrelsy of birds,
Warbling their merry lays of cheer;
But sweetest of all are tender words,
Heart music—sympathy sincere."

William Page Carter.—Echoes from the Glen is a neat, attractive volume by William Page Carter. It is dedicated to the memory of his "gentle friend John Esten Cooke, tender and guileless as a little child, yet rich in wisdom and in intellect passing strong." We learn from the preface that the poems were published "more than partly at the solicitation of my

friends;" and in urging this step, Mr. Carter's friends showed more discernment than has been exhibited in many other similar cases.

The lyrics of the book, more than fifty in number, are divided into poems of sentiment, war poems, dialect verse, Blue Ridge lore, and miscellaneous. Their composition covered more than the Horatian period—a fact that may in part explain their careful finish. Though some of the poems were written, as the preface tells us, in boyhood, there is nothing juvenile in the sentiment or the lyrical technique. They are the work of a poetic artist; and their delicate sentiment, their lilting melody, and their varied form and theme make the volume an admirable contribution to Virginia letters.

In the poems of sentiment we find a prevailing minor key. There is a looking backward, memories filled with tears, the shadows of the even-time. Take, for example, the last stanza of *Sometime*—a poem of tender pathos:—

"Sometime, dear heart, (it may not be for long,)
We shall not sit together hand in hand.
It is the flush of evening and its song
Comes o'er the water and its yellow sand;
It is the time of evening, and I hear
Sweet voices that I have not heard for years
Like a lute-string in the twilight clear;
I listen, and my eyes are wet with tears.
Sometime, dear heart, when eventide goes by,
May we two sit together, you and I."

How much meaning is compressed in the little poem Alas!

One feels the pathos and the silent tragedy of life:—

"The autumn storm beats o'er the vine-clad hall; The autumn leaves are dead, the rain-drops fall, The autumn leaves fly to the window-sill; Within is soft and warm, without is hard and chill. She sits alone; 'tis twilight; she is fair,
The fire flame makes gold her nut-brown hair,
The hands are soft and white, the mellow glow
Hath caught the sad, sweet smile, 'Ah friend, I know,'
she said—
(The raindrops fall),—'The leaves are dead'."

The same tone of sadness is found in The Little Rose of Shane, Old Songs, These Summer Days, When the Sun Went Down, Remembrance, and many others.

The war songs are made up of tributes and memories, for the poet was a part of that heroic time. In I Am Dreaming the great leaders of the Southern armies—Lee, Stuart, Rodes, A. P. Hill, Pickett, and others—pass before the poet's vision and receive a poet's well-considered tribute. The prevailing spirit of the martial poems is contained in the following lines from Ashes of the Past:—

"My lyre's tone Goes outward to the vast of perished years, When these old hills, time-scathed and battle-scarred, Lay blood-red in the shadows of the sun."

Among the miscellaneous poems is a notable one entitled God Bless You, Dear. The words seem to be addressed to a tenderly loved wife who has passed beyond the stars. It is safe to say that a more touching poem was never written in Virginia; and it would be difficult to find in American literature another lyric that so irresistibly makes its way to the fountain of tears.

"If I should say to-night, 'God bless you, dear,'
And stretch my hand to touch your sun-burst hair,
And say, and say, 'Good night!' Oh, would you hear?
And if I said, 'Sweetheart!' Oh, would you care?
From out God's holy realms, Oh! would you hear,
If I should say to-night, 'God bless you, dear?'

"If I should say to-night, 'I'm tired, dear,'
And stretch my hand to lay it in your own,
And say, and say, 'Sweet rest!' Oh, would you hear?
And if I said 'I'm tired,' would its tone
Go up behind the stars, and would you hear,
If I should say to-night, 'God bless you, dear?'

"If I should say to-night, 'The years are drear,'
And send my tears to fill the ocean's home,
And say, and say, 'Oh, life!' then would you hear?
And if I said 'Sweet death!' Oh, would you come
And lead me to the Master's feet and hear
Me say to-night, to-night, 'God bless you, dear?'"

James Lindsay Gordon.—From a biographical sketch prefixed to the Ballads of the Sunlit Years we learn that the author, James Lindsay Gordon, passed away at his home in New York while his poems were going through the press (1904). Educated at William and Mary College and the University of Virginia, he entered the profession of law, practiced for a time at Charlottesville, served three years in the State Senate, and in 1893 removed to New York, where he became Assistant District Attorney. He was recognized as an eloquent speaker, and was repeatedly called on for political and literary addresses.

But his opulent intellectual gifts were not confined to legal and political interests. His thoughts and emotions, particularly in his later years, found utterance in metrical form, which he handled with firm mastery. The result was at last the little volume of Ballads of the Sunlit Years. If here and there in this collection of more than forty lyrics we sometimes meet with a poem that seems the achievement of a tour de force, there are many that cannot be mistaken as the genuine reflection of his own experience. In his life the shadows appear to have come early; and hence, at a period when men's thoughts are usually directed to the future, he began to live in the past, which had assumed the glory of "the sunlit years."

In the tumult of the great city, the poet's thoughts frequently turned, as was natural, to the rural beauty of his native state. In *Longing*, for example, we read:—

"I remember a forest far away
Whose aisles are cool and dim;
And there His voice has spoken to me,
And my soul has answered Him;
In the scent of flowers, in the song of birds,
In the whispering south wind's breath,
He has spoken to me of life's mystery,
And the secrets of birth and death.

"But the voice that reaches the spirit's ear
Through the winds and flowers of the fields
Is lost in this endless rush of men,
This ceaseless clamor of wheels:
And the soul grows sick with doubts and fears,
And the heart grows numb with pain,
As we wonder if ever the olden faith
Can lighten our lives again."

Occasionally we find passing events—Wheeler at Santiago, Suspense, and Gaudium Certaminis—celebrated in his verse, and always with a sweep of thought and feeling that make the poems impressive. In the last named poem, Japan, as she rushes to meet the Muscovite, is made to say exultantly:—

"The time has come. We are going into the battle:

Hark to the caissons rumbling through the dawn,
And far on the Corean hills the muskets rattle,

And the sound of the feet of the horses rushing on;
It has come at last—the time for which we waited

That shall make amends for all the protesting years,
And the hunger of hate and the fury of fight be sated

In a tempest of fire and tears."

Out of the poet's personal experience seem to have arisen the

fine poems Departed, A Ballad of Meeting, Over An Old Love Letter, and Lorraine. The latter poem, if it be not a transcript of a real romance, is at least written with a striking semblance to truth. In spite of its length it is given in full:—

"Bonny Lorraine, have you forgot
The time we walked o'er the morning lea?
I still keep the blue forget-me-not
That you took from your hair and gave to me.
Would you like to walk those ways again
With me at your side in the morning time?
Do you ever think of your youth's sweet prime,
And your young boy lover, Bonny Lorraine?

"Ah, well I remember the time we stood
By the glancing river when day was done,
And the whispering trees in the dim old wood
Turned crimson and gold in the setting sun:
When your heart and your lips and your arms were fain
To cling to me there as your life's one love—
While the stars came out in the skies above,—
Do you remember it, Bonny Lorraine?

"Surely your heart could not forget
The night when I bade you a last farewell;
Your long, dark lashes with tears were wet,
And your anguish more than your lips could tell;
How you kissed me there as I stood in the rain,
And held me fast while you bade me go,—
With your desolate, golden head bowed low;
I know you remember, Bonny Lorraine.

"Across the street where the music swells
You glide through the throng in the shadowy dance.
In your ears the sound of your marriage bells—
In your heart the dream of the old romance;
I see you glimmer across the pane—
The jewels ablaze in your shining hair,—
And the form of another beside you there,
But I do not envy him now, Lorraine.

"Let him bow down low at your royal feet,—
Let him sing love's song if it brings him joy;
I sang it once and I found it sweet
In the days when you charmed me—a foolish boy;
But I never shall waken the old refrain,
Its beautiful music is almost hushed:
My heart was bruised, but it was not crushed,
And it loves you no longer, Bonny Lorraine.

"Dance on while the music throbs and beats:
Drink memory to death in your wedding wine;
He knows not your life whose quick glance meets
The false, sweet light in your eyes divine.
I can look on you now with no more pain,—
On your fair proud face, in your splendid eyes,—
Then looking up to yon starlit skies
Thank God that I lost you, Bonny Lorraine."

Miss Sheffey.—It was Shelley who said that we "learn in suffering what we teach in song." It is certain that a considerable part of our poetry is the fruitage of sorrow. The Spirit-Mother and Other Poems, by Miss Miriam Sheffey, of Marion, Va., is due chiefly to the desolation of bereavement. The titlepoem is a tender tribute to a "beautiful mother who filled the poet's life with love and joy." It is filled with a delicate spiritualism, which has often brought peace to a troubled heart:—

"I hear the sound of her soft old shoes
As she toils up the shadowy stair.
I hear her open my chamber door,—
Yet I know she is not there.

"I see the tears in her gentle eyes,

The shine of her beautiful hair,

The pitying love in her sweet old face,—

Yet I know she is not there.

"I see the folds of her worn black gown
As she sits in the rocking-chair,
And lovingly, tenderly bends o'er my bed,—
Yet I know she is not there."

These few stanzas may be taken as illustrative of Miss Sheffey's poetic gifts and art. There is an ear for melody and a delicacy of touch that raise her verse to the level of genuine literature. She begins with a poetic thought or sentiment, and then shapes it into fitting form, so that each piece is held together by an artistic and satisfying unity. She is not a mere mechanical artificer in verse, but a poet or *maker* in the true sense of that word.

The little volume before us, pleasing in its silvered letters, contains less than a dozen poems. The poet does not range over a large territory. All the poems appeared originally in various religious periodicals. The first four pieces all relate to the author's bereavement, and breathe at the same time a triumphant religious faith and a delicate sense of the spirit world about us. But they are not to be associated in thought with our average obituary verse; for, as already indicated, they are the productions of a real poetic gift and literary culture.

Miss Sheffey has made an effective use of symbolism in *The Old Church Organ*. The old organ has been removed to the lumber room of the church basement to make place for a handsomer and more powerful instrument. The poet has given voice to the pathetic sentiments of the aged and cast-off organ, whose long and faithful service is forgotten in the exultation over the newcomer:—

"Yet yesterday I was forsaken!
And never a tear was shed!
Never a soothing word they spoke
To comfort the poor old heart they broke!
I heard no sympathetic sigh,
No whispered grief, no soft goodbye!
Never a word they said!

"I am out of sight and all hearing;
Another has taken my place.
Another will join with the worshipping throng
In jubilant chorus, in sweet solemn song.
Another of workmanship noble and fine
With voice far more mighty and mellow than mine
Will tell of God's wonderful grace."

It is the sadness of old age rudely thrust aside and forgotten in the fierce and irreverent competitions of the present day.

In Partridges in November, we find, along with some graphic descriptions of nature, the poet's sympathy with the poor birds that are unfeelingly destroyed to make a day's sport:—

"Stealthily over field and bog
The enemy comes with gun and dog!
And O, such a roar, such a tumult is heard
That even the grand old trees are stirred!
And the little brown creatures so timid, so shy,
They tremble and scream, they flutter and fly.
In the forest confusion and panic reign.
Where was peace now is war with its harm and pain.
Let pitying tears be solemnly shed!
Let a dirge be sung and a prayer be said!
The little brown creatures are dead, dead, dead!"

Samuel H. Newberry.—Eagle Oak and Other Poems, by Samuel H. Newberry, of Bland, Virginia, is a volume of more than four hundred pages. It possesses a special interest apart from the technical quality of the verse, which, it must be said, is hardly up to the level of the finest lyrical standards. In his rugged strength and straightforwardness, perhaps the author would have rejected or despised the Horatian maxim which insists on chastising ten times to perfect accuracy each lyrical effort. Intent alone on the idea to be expressed, and unfettered

by a fastidious sense of literary art, he has shown himself independent of all overwrought refinements of poetic form.

But this considerable body of verse is notable as the first large volume coming from southwestern Virginia. In its spirit and themes it is true to the region from which it sprang. Mr. Newberry might well be regarded as a typical son of "the great Southwest," appreciating its natural advantages and beauties, and cherishing its fearless independence of spirit. Here for the first time do we find the grandeur of Burks Garden, the beauty of Mountain Lake, and the sublimity of Bald Knob and Angel's Rest formally celebrated. Indeed, the title poem, Eagle Oak, is largely a glorification of the streams and mountains of the southwestern part of the State. Here is a typical passage:—

"Old Bald Knob, with naked crown,
A god of wrath, is looking down,
With knitted brow and vengeful ire,
With smoking lips and tongue of fire:
He holds the sleeping earthquake down,
That shakes the hills for miles around;
And looks the Titans in the face,
Who dare not hurl him from his place;
Enthroned upon a base of rocks,
Defying all the seismic shocks."

The poet has an eye for the grander aspects of nature—its huge forms in mountains, ocean, and sky. He would hardly bend with Chaucer's tenderness over a daisy in the morning dawn until it had opened its petals to the sun.

The chief interest of the volume in hand is found, perhaps, in its revelation of personality. The poems cover a long period of the author's life, and are in large measure autobiographic, reflecting not only outward incident but more especially his thought on current events. The poems, as is stated in the preface, "cover a period of nearly fifty years of the author's life,

and but very few of them have ever seen the light of publicity. They have been written at odd hours, wherever the author chanced to be, by the fireside, on the farm, in the saddle, on the train, in the bivouac, in the sleepless hours of night; or wherever the call of the Muse wooed him, she always found a listening ear."

Though a farmer, the author's thought has not been confined wholly to sowing and reaping, and the raising of ponderous cattle. He has kept in touch with the intellectual movements of the age; he has taken an active part in the politics of the State and occupied a seat in its legislative halls; and above all, he has kept his soul open, amidst the tumults about him, to the sweet influences of the silent realm of spirit and beauty. Thus we read in *Ideal*, written in 1889:—

"I wandered away in my dreaming—
It mattered but little to me
The way that my feet were wending,
So long as my spirit was free.
So weary was I of earth's travel,
I journeyed away to a clime
To find for my soul—some Eden—
Not found in the desert of time.

"Some rest for a heart that was weary;
Some place for the spirit's prayer,
Where the soul was bowed in its sorrow
And fighting to conquer despair.
Till the sky of my hope would brighten,
And the night of its gloom give way;
As darkness gives way in the morning
To welcome the opening of day."

Throughout the volume we meet with a spirit of sterling honesty, truth, and duty. The poet despises a hypocrite; he denounces the tricks of self-seeking politicians; he casts a doubt on the disinterested character of some of our legislation. Especially does he entertain wrathful sentiments against a corrupt plutocracy which is wronging and oppressing the people, and using party names to further their dastardly schemes. One of the most vigorous lyrics in the book, coming straight from the heart of the poet, is a call to *The Tillers of the Soil*, written in 1891:—

"Ye tillers, and ye toilers,
Who make the nation's bread,
You bear its heavy burdens,
And on the crumbs are fed;
You feed the idle millions
Who sun themselves in ease,
And rob you at their leisure,
And tax you as they please.

"And, as the patient donkey,
You've borne the burden long,
Till virtue's made you patient,
And patience's made you strong.
Assert your rights as freemen;
Dethrone the tyrant gold,
And tell the labor robbers
Your birthright is unsold."

In one particular the book makes a less favorable impression. Though bravely and honestly seeking the truth, the poet has fallen under the spell of a sceptical and materialistic philosophy—perhaps that of Herbert Spencer—and has given up his faith in a personal immortality. He has gone through severe mental conflicts in pondering the matter, and it comes to the surface in more than one of his poems. In Destiny Ends in the Grave, we read:—

"When night shuts down on his dreaming,
And the stars are lost to his view,
And thought has folded its pinions,
And memory has nothing to do;

The flowers will bloom in their season,
And harvests will ripen their grain;
The sleeping will never awaken
As long as eternities reign."

This sorrowful view seems to have come to him late in life; let us hope that he may have strength to escape from the toils of a philosophy, which has already lost much of its influence among the ablest thinkers of the world. The great argument of Tennyson—the divinely implanted conviction of the race—still stands:—

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:

Thou madest man, he knows not why;

He thinks he was not made to die;

And thou hast made him: thou art just."

Mrs. Flora L. Mack.—The poem Old Jamestown, by Mrs. Flora Lapham Mack, of Danville, owes its origin to the present interest of Virginians in the early colonial history of the State. The romance, heroism and seed-time significance of those far-off days are felt as never before. Mrs. Mack in rapid ballad measure has summoned many forms and faces from the past; and Pocahontas, Captain Smith, the maidens sent over by Lord Sandys to be wives of the lonely colonists, Lord Delaware in all the pomp of pride and station, and Lord Berkeley with "his sweet Virginia wife," Lady Frances, successively appear in the verisimilitude of life.

The mellifluous measure is well illustrated in the opening stanzas of the poem:—

"By the low, wave-beaten island
Swiftly flows the yellow stream,
And the lapping of the water
Lulls me as I idly dream.

"Up and down the widening river,
White sails pass with lazy grace;
Wildly scream the flitting sea-fowl,
Desolation stamps the place.

"Gazing on the high-arched portal
Of that old, historic tower,
Forms and faces pass before me,
Lured by memory's magic power."

As we close the entertaining booklet, we can hardly help wishing that the poet had sat longer at the feet of Tennyson, and then, with something of his laborious skill, had continued her metrical sketches of early colonial life. With her lyrical gifts, it was in her power to have given us a more comprehensive and finished picture.

Charles W. Bowers.—The Newspaper Waste Basket and other Poems by Charles William Bowers, of Highland Springs, is a small volume quite unique in form. It is the work of a practical printer, who not only composed the poems, but "personally bought the paper, cut it, set the type, printed, and bound the volume." The book is bound in a form to resemble a newspaper file, and the fly-leaves are scraps of printed sheets. The author was for a time connected with the daily press of Richmond, which has been very generous in the notice taken of his poetic efforts.

The little book in question contains nearly thirty brief poems, the chief of which is the title piece Newspaper Waste Basket. This poem records the reflections and memories that come to the author as he delves—

"Down into my old waste basket By the desk in corner dark."

Nearly all the poems exhibit a serious thoughtfulness; there is a clear recognition of the tragic and sorrowful side of life. There is something to be desired in the way of poetic technique, and it requires an effort to make *arbiter* rhyme with *writer*.

The sea in its manifold aspects seems to have appealed strongly to the poet's imagination. Four of the poems relate to the sea; and Where Waves Break, one of the best in the booklet, must serve as a specimen of our author's poetic art:—

"Hark! the roar
From the shore,
Breaking through the tranquil night,
As, with suicidal might,
Waves dash 'gainst the silent rock,
Which withstands the watery shock,
Seeming in the gloom to mock
E'en the sea."

A Plea for Executive Clemency shows a sympathetic nature; The Music of the Kettle reveals delicate poetic feeling; Little Bill's Christmas embodies a bit of pathos; and Only a Reporter records an instance of self-forgetting heroism.

Mrs. Garber.—Mrs. Virginia Armistead Garber, in her *Pocahontas*, once more takes up the beautiful story connected with our early colonial history. The book is embellished with a number of rubricated illustrations prepared by the author, and also with a reproduction of the only authentic portrait of the Indian heroine. The poem recounts the life of Pocahontas from her childhood in the princely home of Powhatan, where she had—

"A state, and care, and loving, That exceeded all the others"—

to her death in England, as she was about to embark for her native land.

"In the church, beneath the chancel, There in Gravesend sleeps Matoax, Proudly owned by honored lineage; In Virginia still 'Our Princess'." The facts embodied in the poem are drawn from Captain John Smith's history, and other original sources. The story is told in trochaic tetrameter, which somehow seems peculiarly fitted for Indian life and legend. Though the meter is not infallibly correct, it is upon the whole handled skilfully and pleasantly; and though the poem is not cast in a large epic mold, it is rounded out in symmetrical completeness. The incidents are put into the mouth of—

"Omawada, Indian handmaid Of the Princess Pocahontas."

The friendly attitude of Matoax or the "Princess of the White Feather," is explained in the poem by a resplendent vision, in which she saw the giant-winged and thunder-laden ships of the colonists:—

"Then the white-robed one spake to her Whispered soft like breeze of evening, That the God who made the heavens, And the earth and all things therein, Wished her to befriend the white man, She, the little Indian maiden, She, the guardian of the white man Who was coming o'er the ocean."

The rescue of Captain Smith, which has sometimes been dwelt upon with elaborate detail, is described in a few lines, which bring the well-known scene graphically before us:—

"All the Indians danced about him,
Wild with shoutings, wild with leapings.
When they circled close about him
With their clubs aloft to strike him,
Pocahontas with swift motion
Sped to him, his head encircling
With her arms—and thus she saved him."

After the long and successful wooing of Rolfe, the happy pair proceed to the church in Jamestown, where in the presence of the governor they are married:—

"When she stepped within the doorway,
Through the fair wide-open windows
Came the soft breeze, and the sunshine
All the air was sweet with odours,
All the house was fair with flowers,
They had gathered from the forest,
From the hedges, and the thickets."

But nowhere else does the Indian princess appear more lovely than in the presence of the royal court of England:—

"When the mighty King of England,
And his wife, the good Queen Anne,
Sought to give unto the Princess
Of Virginia royal welcome,
She with dignity and calmness,
With a modest sweet demeanor,
Passed through all that dazzling splendor,
Through the lines of knightly courtiers,
Through the crowds of stately ladies,
Who, with eager eyes and manner,
Scanned her looks, her words, her actions.
Much they marvelled that a savage
Wild, untutored Indian woman
Could demean herself so queenly."

It is eminently fitting that while the thoughts of Virginians are turning back to the settlement at Jamestown three centuries ago, the image of the wonderful Indian maiden should be brought before us. Mrs. Garber's conception and portrayal of her character presents her in a sweet, human, womanly light.

### CHAPTER XX

## Poets of West Virginia

West Virginia is a progressive young state. In recent years it has advanced its material and educational interests in a marked degree. With progress in other departments, poetry has not been entirely neglected. The literary traditions of the Old Dominion have been perpetuated; and, as we shall presently see, the daughter has produced singers that would have reflected credit upon the mother.

C. Russell Christian.—The Mountain Bard, by C. Russell Christian, is a considerable volume of original verse published in Huntingdon, W. Va., in 1885. It is divided into nine parts, and embraces a wide range of themes. Had the author been able to fill up his large scheme with a corresponding poetic charm, he would have made an important contribution to the literature of West Virginia.

He took his vocation with sufficient seriousness, and no doubt felt a conscious and pardonable pride in being for some years the only representative of the Muses in a songless land. It was his noble purpose, as stated in the dedication, "to sow the seeds of literature in this hitherto barren land." A single brief quotation—a quatrain on War and Peace—is given by way of illustration; ex uno disce omnia:—

"Peace is a fabric built with labor great,
The true foundation of both Church and State;
War is a monster that with gory hands
Hews down the fabric and o'erwhelms the lands."

As for the rest, the author is taken at his word: "he hopes that [316]

criticism will for once consider the size of the victim and forbear to strike." For all well-meant effort, however imperfect or unsuccessful, there should be a feeling of kindness.

Hu Maxwell.—In turning to Hu Maxwell we find a poet of a different caliber. His *Idyls of the Golden Shore*, published in New York, in 1889, is a volume of singular power. The poems are associated with scenes and incidents of the Pacific Coast. In the lengthy poetical preface, we read:—

"I've wandered far into the wildest West;
And that far wildest West has swept my soul,
And set it quivering in a deep unrest,
Beyond my bidding and beyond control.
I've watched the ocean's waters rise and roll
Against the rocks that cliffed from mountain high;
I've heard the murmurs rush on reef and shoal,
Complaining all the night with moan and sigh,
And in the morning hour grow faint, and cease, and die."

Mr. Maxwell's songs are among the largest and strongest that the grandeur of western scenery and the daring of western life have inspired.

The Bandit's Bride is a romance strongly told, reflecting some of the strange and puzzling contradictions of woman's character. The maid of San Jose bestows her heart upon the bandit, and the poet is led to exclaim:—

"O the shallow heart of woman, changing as the shadows change!

Turning from the true and noble, leaning toward the wild and strange:

Looking ever to a level lower than her native sphere; Giddy-headed, undecided. Where romances most appear, There you find her, there you meet her; there you evermore will find.

She will follow handsome phantoms and will leave the world behind.

She will turn to what is newest, and her destiny will cast At the feet of whom she knows not. To be best is to be last." Nacimiento is a tale of priestly villainy and its punishment. Its passionate stanzas, which here and there repeat a cadence of Byron, are full of poetic beauty and truth:—

"One word of silent prayer in earnest trust
Is worth eternity of soulless form,
And words without devotion. From the dust
A soul can be uplifted to the warm
And peaceful light of truth. We cannot thrust
Ourselves to heaven, nor stop the raging storm.
Another Hand must guide us, and will guide.
A rest will come at last, though storms betide.

"Hell lavishes its mercies like its fire

To those who ask them. Prayer is ne'er in vain
When made for ruin and for mad desire.

The answer cometh soon with balm of bane;
And in the nearer rush of din and dire,

The herald bursts with shriek and yell amain
Upon the vision of one whose prayer
Hath called the spectres up from dark despair."

Through the warp and woof of grand description and thrilling incident in the *Idyls* runs the golden thread of a tender, personal romance. Whether real or fanciful makes but little difference; its charm, like the sweet sadness of a haunting memory, appears again and again.

"In the far-off summer land of light
Where the winds are soft and fair,
Where the dewdrops cluster in lilies white,
With a peaceful rest in the silent night,
Is the home of Mabel Saint Clair.

"'Tis a summer shore and a crystal strand,
And the whispering river flows,
And the waves are washing the silver sand,
And the orange groves afar expand,
Like the dreams that are dreamed in fairyland,
And only the dreamer knows."

Col. Dudley H. Davis.—Songs of the Age, by Col. Dudley H. Davis, is an illustrated volume which appeared in Baltimore in 1891. It opens with a regular ante-bellum preface: it is submitted to the public only with "the greatest diffidence and through the earnest solicitation of friends." The author recognizes that "a classic education is a prerequisite to the writing of poetry that will interest the literary world," yet confesses that he is without that prerequisite, "having been bred a farmer, and spent thirty-two of his best years in mercantile transactions."

The editor of the Baltimore Herald, in a complimentary letter which we trust cost him no twinges of conscience, shows us the strong, healthful, heroic life of the author. "When you wrote me word you had cut sixty tons of hay," says the editor, "and had gone to buy cattle to which to feed the hay, instead of baling it and sending it away to market, to thereby impoverish your land—then it was I thought of the author of Home, Sweet Home, and wondered why every poet could not hitch Pegasus to the utility chariot. But you know they do not; therefore I have always admired the exception to the general rule, which is happily embodied in your peculiar character. Your poems are good salad for the home circle; they are good solid sense, and happy metre with it. We never get tired of hearing the song of the wild birds. There is none of the piratical cling-clang in the music of the wild woods."

The statements made in the last two sentences are very true, but of very remote connection with our author's poetry. There is nothing of the spontaneous, wild-note music about it. It is the plainest sort of salad, unseasoned by any of the spicy condiments so precious to an Epicurean literary taste. A single line will sufficiently illustrate its literary quality; the War Eagle begins:—

<sup>&</sup>quot;When Southern war guns of the South."

Alas for the blindness or the insincerity of friendship. On the introductory pages are printed numerous complimentary notices, which pronounce the volume "full of rich gems of original thought" and "a series of beautiful productions, chaste, instructive, attractive, and elevating." And the *Baltimore Herald* calls "the little book a gem. It will live, and as a relic which time will not efface. It has the radiance of a golden sunset, whose hallowed glow will throw its beams athwart the shades of the Valley, and then glitter anew on the shore eternal."

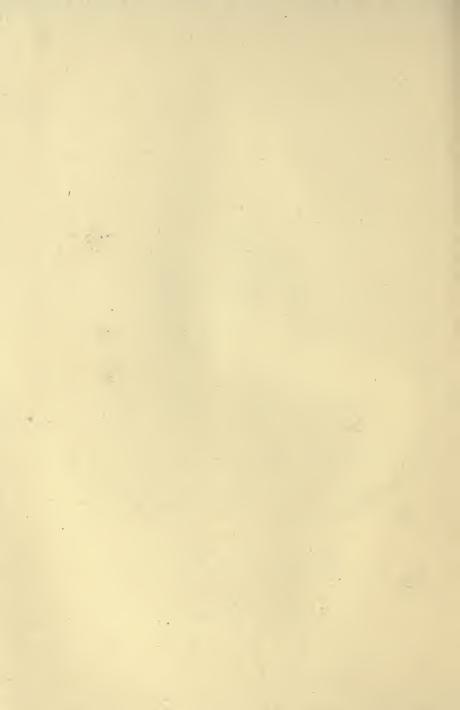
Miss Emma Withers.—Wildwood Chimes is a volume by Miss Emma Withers, published in Cincinnati in 1891. It possesses real poetic merit both in sentiment and form. The spirit of the poetess knows the rapture that comes from the ethereal realm of poetry. Her feet have touched high Olympus. In Poesy she says:—

"I breathe the breath of gods. I lie
On golden shores of Arcady;
And softly life forever goes,
The world forgotten and its woes,
While I with all the gods may vie
On Helicon."

In her verse we meet with a sense of the injustice of life. Though there are many crowned heroes, there are a greater number of the uncrowned. Often the bravest and truest live and die unknown and unsung. In *Uncrowned* the poet asks:—

"Ah! Fame, do thy laurel-wreathed pages
Know aught of the hallowed place
That softens the rime of the ages—
Though nameless forever its grace—
Where worn with the fever of living,
Yet true unto death to its trust,
And spent with the unreturned giving
A woman's heart crumbled to dust?"





In the verse of Miss Withers there is a tender sympathy with nature that opens her eyes to its beauties and her heart to its teachings. In its quiet retreats she finds a peace unknown among the noisy haunts of men. Here is a rondeau on *Nature*:—

"I sought within men's hollow creeds

A healing for the sorest needs

That vexed my life. They mocked my quest;

The hidden fires within my breast

Burned on. I sought the sylvan meads, I watched the flight of winged seeds, I found the soul in meanest weeds,
I saw young birds from out the nest
On swift wings soar.

I follow Nature where she leads,
And naught to me are men and deeds;
For in the pathway she hath pressed
I find the benison of rest—
And safe from life's tormenting greeds,
I seek no more."

At the King's Gate is a significant Eastern tale, and As Memory Tells it O'er is a pleasing bit of poetic autobiography. Wildwood Chimes, as a whole, is inspired by nature, and is as poetic and pleasing as its name would indicate.

M. S. Cornwell.—Wheat and Chaff is a little volume made up of verses, letters and extracts from the writings of M. S. Cornwell. It was published at Romney, W. Va., as a memorial of the author by his two surviving brothers. The poems it contains are well worth preserving; and as we read them, there comes a regret that the poet's premature death renders the number so small. Had he lived longer, his gifted, generous spirit would doubtless have enriched further the poetic literature of his State.

Marshall S. Cornwell was a native of Hampshire County, W. Va. He was brought up on a farm without the advantages of a liberal education; but his insatiable thirst for knowledge made him a great reader. His stores of information were copious, and as his poems clearly indicate, his taste acquired a scholarly refinement. He became the editor of a country newspaper, first at Petersburg, W. Va., and afterwards at Elkins, and it was in the columns of his paper that many of his verses first appeared.

His preference was for the country. The rush and tumult of the city were oppressive to him:—

"Where Mammon's mighty temples
Stand beside the stony ways,
And the roar of business echoes
Through all the gloomy days."

Especially in the joyous springtime, as he tells us in one of his dialect poems:—

"There ain't no city big enough
To hold me now at all,
Since the cherry trees are bloomin',
An' I hear the robin's call.

"For the Master, in His goodness,
Made the country fair an' free,
The birds an' flowers an' buddin' trees
Fer lazy chaps like me."

As the poet's health became impaired, he fled to Florida and the Rio Grande in search of restoration. At times his thoughts naturally turned to the past, and in Lessons to Learn we have a glimpse of his childhood home on the farm:—

"Oh, the dreams we dream in our youthful years; And our hopes, that end in bitter tears, As we weave the web and the mystical plan, The aim, and the life, and the doom of man. I'd give the wisdom the world has taught, And all the joys the years have brought, To live again, in the self-same way, The days when father used to say, 'You've housed the stock, and given 'em hay, An' plenty of wood piled up to burn? Well, don't forget, you've lessons to learn'."

The poet's disposition was bright and cheerful. He was not a disciple of the strenuous school; on the contrary, he loved to "loiter by the way," and drink in the beauties and joys with which God has filled the world. In his Song of the Sea it is not the tumultuous Northern ocean that pleases him most:—

"Ah, better I love the sea,
The magical, tropical sea,
Where the sun gleams warm,
In the track of the storm,
For it softly sings to me.

"It sings of love,
And the blue above
Bends down to the blue of the wave;
Its soothing tone
Is a song of home,
By shores its waters lave."

His search for health was in vain. From El Paso he wrote to his brothers that he "had given up the battle and was coming home to die." His sick room was filled with the light of a cheerful spirit. The prayer he had breathed in A Dream of Rest was granted:—

"And I prayed, O Father, when cometh the night,
At the end of my weary day,
May I wait, as calm as the wood-crowned height
In the glow of the sun's last ray.

"May the peace that falls on nature's breast
When the day dies out of the sky,
Fill my soul at last, with joy and rest,
When my last hour draweth nigh."

Upon the fly-leaf of a little scrap-book carried by the author in his ramblings through the pine woods of Florida were found these two beautiful stanzas, which give his own estimate of his brief, uneventful life:—

"A little book of happy dreams,

The product of an idle day—
Stray flashes of the light that streams

Across my lone and barren way.

"I would not change my humble lot
To reign a king through countless years,
For I, though unknown and forgot,
Have heard the music of the spheres."

Waitman Barbe.—Waitman Barbe, a native of Monongalia County, W. Va., is a man of versatile talent. He has labored in the fields of journalism, education, poetry, and fiction—and everywhere with ability and success. His one volume of poetry, entitled Ashes and Incense, was published in Philadelphia in 1898, and met with a considerable degree of critical and popular favor. Professor Barbe has the gift of refined musical utterance. Though he is not often very profound, he has an eye for all that is beautiful in nature and art, and a soul alive to the joys and sufferings of life. Through his clearness and melody he has the power of lifting the lowliest themes above the commonplace.

In his verse nature is not often described for its own sake;

its forms and tones are associated in some way with human life or human sentiment. This method imparts depth and freshness to his study of the phenomena of nature. The December wind, for example, assumes the character of a fell destroyer:—

"Hear how the wind complaineth all day long
Because naught now remains for him to kill:
There is no flower, or brook, or bird, or song
Since that sad night when he came down the hill.
The lean and shivering grass,
Awake to hear him pass,
Fell down and crept away, but could not hide,—
The whole world's wrath hath touched the north hill-side."

Like all true poets, our author laments the rush and clamor of the streets, by which the holiest impulses and thoughts are drowned. There are better things than the gain and show of the bustling world; far away from its confusion and conflicts may be discerned the infinite music of the eternal. To this realm, in his poem *Eternal Silence*, the poet turns:—

"But through my open window, far away
Beyond the utmost reach of traffic's sway,
Into eternal silences I gaze:
Infinitude of peace and patience stays
Upon those heights, that man may know the will
Of Him who calmed the waves with, 'Peace, be still!'"

Our poet has been a great admirer of Sidney Lanier, some of whose notes he has caught, and to whom he has paid a beautiful tribute:—

"The seas were not too deep for thee; thine eye
Was comrade with the farthest star on high:
The marsh burst into bloom for thee,—
And still abloom shall ever be!
Its sluggish tide shall henceforth bear alway
A charm it did not hold until thy day."

The little poem *Finis*, which fittingly closes the volume, reveals to us the manful spirit in which the author is doing his work:—

"I ask not

When shall the day be done, and rest come on? I pray not

That soon from me the 'curse of toil' be gone; I seek not

A sluggard's couch with drowsy curtain drawn. But give me

Time to fight the battle out as best I may;

And give me
Strength and place to labor still at evening's gray;
Then let me

Sleep as one who toiled afield through all the day."

Mrs. Dandridge.—Mrs. Danske Dandridge was born in Copenhagen when her father, the Hon. Henry Bedinger, was minister to Denmark. In 1877 she became the wife of Mr. Stephen Dandridge, and has since resided in a beautiful country home near Shepherdstown, W. Va. She has published two volumes of poetry: Rose Brake Poems appeared in 1890, and Joy and Other Poems in 1900. The pleasing portrait in the latter volume suggests at a glance the prevailing character of her poems. The finely shaped head and delicate, womanly features can be associated only with what is refined in thought and feeling. We do not look for—

"The strident wail, the shrilling discontent,"

but for the music of-

"The budding spring, With all her birds and every pleasant thing."

Joy and Other Poems, the last and richest vintage of Mrs.

Dandridge's genius, is divided into four parts: 1. Poems of the imagination; 2. Poems of nature; 3. Poems of love and friendship; 4. Miscellaneous poems. All are brief, generally not exceeding a page; and from whatever sphere the themes are taken, the poems exhibit a rare and delicate artistic form. The authoress knows and reverences art. In the prayer to Silence, for example, thought and diction are exquisitely blended:—

"Quell thy barbed lightning in the sombre west;
Quiet thy thunder-dogs that bay the moon;
Soothe the day's fretting, like a tender nurse;
Breathe on our spirits till they be in tune:
Were it not best
To hush all noises in the universe,
And bless with solemn quietude, that thus
The still, small voice of God might speak to us?"

The title piece is a happy fancy, which carries with it a deep, sad burden of truth:—

"She did not need to breathe her happy name;
I felt that she was Joy, whose mate is Love,
And mother Peace. She shook her loosened hair,
That made a shining circle round her head.
But I—'Dear Joy!', I cried, 'what do you here,
While weary men and women curse and moan,
And pine away, and sin, and hate, and jeer;
What do you, idling, with closed wings, alone?'

"Ah me! she spoke, and sighed, if Joy can sigh:
'Scant welcome in the homes of men have I.
It is a time of doubting and unrest,
And Greed doth drive me forth from many a breast.
Alas! I have an ancient enemy,
Whose robes are tinsel, and her face a lie;
Men call her Pleasure, but I know her twin
Is Pain; their age, Remorse; their shadow, Sin'."

The little poem of *The Roses* is a tender twining of the queen of flowers with a woman's life. The maiden fair plucks them in childhood, and later braids them when love has awakened in her heart. A dark red rose is entwined in her hair when by the river she receives her lover's raptured kiss, and—

"Her life is crowned with its perfect hour."

And then,-

"White and silent the maiden lies;
White and still in the shaded room;
Closed to earth are her curtained eyes;
Sweet is the air with a faint perfume.
White are the roses on her breast;
White is the soul of the maid at rest:
Drop a tear on her loving brow;
Naught of earth can stain her now."

Our author's conception of the poet's vocation is high and true. The poet should not be the weaver of idle melodies, but a seer, whose mission it is to reveal the beauties and mysteries of the universe:—

"If thou art a poet-son of God,

Fix upon the heights thy steadfast glance;
Listen with quick ear to catch His word;

Speak, as He shall give thee utterance."

There is fine irony in the little poem Fate:-

"With Sodom apples fill thy harvest bin;
Barter heart's wealth for gold in Fashion's mart;
Traverse rough seas some distant point to win,
Without a chart.

"Fray the fine cord of Love until it break;
Launch thy pirogue before the storm abate;
Tease the prone, sleeping Peril till it wake:
Then rail at Fate!"

It will be seen that Mrs. Dandridge belongs, not to the great, but to the exquisite singers of our country.

# APPENDIX

### Titles of Works Reviewed

### VIRGINIA

- ASTROP:—Original Poems on a Variety of Subjects, interspersed with Tales, forming the largest miscellaneous collection ever published by an American Author, by Robert Francis Astrop, of Brunswick, Va. Philadelphia, 1835; pp. 132.
- Bartley:—Lays of Ancient Virginia and Other Poems, by James Avis Bartley. Richmond, 1855; pp. 204.
- Poems, by James Avis Bartley. Charlottesville, 1882; pp. 93. Blackwell:—The Poetical Works of James De Ruyter Blackwell, in three volumes. New York, 1879.
- Booton:—Fugitive Lines of John Heiskell Booton, edited with an Introduction and Notes, by William Haller Cassell. Salem, Va., 1899; pp. 32.
  - Songs and Fantasies, by John Heiskell Booton and Edwin Latham Quarles. Salem, Va., 1900; pp. 56.
- Bowers:—Newspaper Waste Basket and Other Poems, by Charles William Bowers. Highland Springs, Va., 1906; pp. 47.
- Branch:—Life,—A Poem in Three Books, by William Branch, Jr. Richmond, 1819; pp. 218.
- BRYAN:—The Mountain Muse, Comprising the Adventures of Daniel Boone and the Power of Virtuous and Refined Beauty, by Daniel Bryan. Harrisonburg, 1813; pp. 252.
- Burk:—Bunker Hill, or the Death of General Warren: an Historical Tragedy in five Acts, by John Burk, Late of Trinity College, Dublin. New York, 1817.
- CABELL:—An Odd Volume of Facts and Fiction, in Prose and Verse, by Julia Mayo Cabell. Richmond, 1852.
- Carter:—A Medley: A Poem by Bernard M. Carter, of Virginia. London, 1823; pp. 30.
- Carter, St. Leger Landon:—Nugae by Nugator; or, Pieces in Prose and Verse. Baltimore, 1844.

- Carter. New York, 1904; pp. 138.
- CHEEVES:—Sketches in Prose and Verse, by Mrs. E. W. Foote Cheeves. Baltimore, 1849; pp. 264.
- CLAIBORNE:—Hawthorne Leaves, by Martha J. Claiborne. Baltimore, 1894; pp. 200.
- CLARKSON:—Songs of Love and War, by Henry Mazyck Clarkson, A. M., M. D. Manassas Journal Press, Manassas, Va., 1898; pp. 158.
- CLAYTOR:—Otterdale; or, Pen Pictures of Farm Life, and Other Poems, by Graham Claytor, Liberty, Va. Richmond, 1885; pp. 72.
- COOKE:—Froissart Ballards and Other Poems, by Philip Pendleton Cooke. Philadelphia, 1847; pp. 216.
- COOPER: —The Musings of Myron, by Charles W. Cooper. New Market, Va., 1880; pp. 50.
- COTTEN:—The White Doe,—The Fate of Virginia Dare: An Indian Legend, by Sallie Southall Cotten. Philadelphia, 1901; pp. 89.
- Dabney:—Poems, Original and Translated, by Richard Dabney. Second Edition. Philadelphia, 1815; pp. 172.
- DAVIS:—Poetry on Several Subjects for the People, by B. W. Davis, of Valley School. Richmond, 1855; pp. 20.
- DAVIS: —Poems of Laura; an Original American Work, by Martha Ann Davis. Petersburg, 1818; pp. 106.
- DAY:—The Blended Flags, by Mrs. W. C. Day. Danville, 1898; pp. 46.
- DonLeavy:—A Bunch of Flowers, by Kathleen DonLeavy. Angel Guardian Press, Boston, 1904; pp. 90.
- ELWES, A. W.:—The Potomac Muse, by a Lady, a Native of Virginia. Richmond, 1825; pp. 172.
- EVANS:—Sir Francis Drake, and Other Fugitive Poems, by Col. Thos. J. Evans. Richmond, 1895; pp. 72.
- FARMER:—The Fairy of the Stream and Others Poems, by C. M. Farmer. Richmond, 1847; pp. 167.
- FIREY: -Poems, by Samuel M. Firey. Roanoke, 1904; pp. 282.
- FITZ:—Gallery of Poetic Pictures; comprising True Portraits and Fancy Sketches, interspersed with Humorous, Moral, and Solemn Pieces, together with Historic, Patriotic, and Sentimental Poems, and Memories of the Past, by James Fitz. Richmond, 1857; pp. 195.

- Garber:—Pocahontas, by Mrs. Virginia Armistead Garber. Illustrated by the author. New York, 1907; pp. 39.
- GLASGOW:—The Freeman and Other Poems, by Ellen Glasgow, New York, 1902; pp. 56.
- GORDON:—For Truth and Freedom, by Armistead C. Gordon. Staunton, Va., 1898; pp. 50.
- GORDON AND PAGE:—Befo' de War, Echoes in Negro Dialect, by A. C. Gordon and Thomas Nelson Page. New York, 1888; pp. 130.
- Gordon:—Ballads of the Sunlit Years, by James Lindsay Gordon. New York, 1904; pp. 84.
- Greene:—A Legend of Old Virginia, by Willian Batchelder Greene. London, 1891; pp. 14.
- GREENWAY:—Here and There,—A Collection of Reprinted Pieces from the Religious Herald and other Periodicals, by J. R. G., together with Unpublished Poems by the same Author. Richmond, 1892; pp. 46.
- Gregory:—Bonniebell and Other Poems, by Edward S. Gregory. Lynchburg, Va., 1880; pp. 268. Lenore and Other Poems,—Original and Translated, by Edward

S. Gregory. Lynchburg, 1883; pp. 268.

- Haines, Hiram:—Mountain Buds and Blossoms, wove in a Rustic Garland, by the Stranger of Fairfax Lodge, No. 43—Fairfax Chapter, No. 13—and Petersburg Council of Royal and Select Masters, No. 5. Kunst macht Gunst. Petersburg, 1825; pp. 204.
- Henkel:—Kurzer Zeitvertreib, bestehend in einigen Liedern, dienlich zur Sittenlehre, von Paul Henkel. Dayton, Ohio, 1851. (First edition in 1810).
- HOLCOMBE:—Poems, by William H. Holcombe, M. D. New York, 1860; pp. 360.
- Hope:—A Wreath of Virginia Bay Leaves,—Poems by James Barron Hope, Selected and Edited by his Daughter, Janey Hope Marr. Richmond, 1895; pp. 159.
- Howard:—The Mystic Circle of Kate's Mountain, by John Howard. Richmond, 1895; pp. 12.
- Janney:—The Last of the Lenapé and Other Poems, by Samuel M. Janney. Philadelphia, 1839; pp. 180.
- JORDAN:—Flowers of Hope and Memory: a Collection of Poems, by Cornelia J. M. Jordon. Richmond, 1861; pp. 330.

  Echoes from the Cannon, by Cornelia J. Matthews Jordan, edited

by Theresa Jordan Ambler. Buffalo, N. Y., 1899; pp. 207.

- JULAP:—The Glosser: a Poem in Two Books, by Giles Julap, of Chotank, Va., 1802; pp. 72.
- Kieffer: —Hours of Fancy; or, Vision and Vigil, by Aldine S. Kieffer. Dayton, Va., 1881; pp. 237.
- Lee: -Virginia Georgics, written for the Hole and Corner Club of Powhatan, by Charles Carter Lee. Richmond, 1858.
- LEES:—The Musings of Carol, Containing an Essay on Liberty, The Desperado, a Tale of the Ocean, and Other Original Poems, by Thomas J. Lees. Wheeling, 1831.
- Lewis:—Flowers and Weeds of the Old Dominion,—Poems Collected by John Lewis, the Author of Young Kate, etc. Frankfort, Ky., 1859; pp. 370. (In part written by the compiler).
- Lewis: —The Nosegay, by John Moncure Lewis. (Included in Flowers and Weeds of the Old Dominion).
- LITTLEFORD:—The Wreath or, Verses on Various Subjects, by a Lady of Richmond. Richmond, 1828. (Included in Flowers and Weeds of the Old Dominion collected by John Lewis).
- LOMAX:—The Notes of an American Lyre, by Judith Lomax, a Native of Virginia. Richmond, 1813; pp. 60.
- Lucas:—The Wreath of Eglantine and Other Poems, edited and in part composed by Daniel Bedinger Lucas. Baltimore, 1869; pp. 169.
- Lucas: —The Wreath of Eglantine, by Virginia Lucas. (See preceding work.)
- McCabe:—Scraps, by John Collins McCabe. Richmond 1835; pp. 186. Mack:—Old Jamestown: an Historical Poem, by Flora Lapham Mack, 1906; pp. 16.
- MARR:—Heart-Life in Song, by Miss Fannie H. Marr. Richmond, 1880.
  - Virginia and Other Poems, by Miss Fannie H. Marr. Philadelphia, 1881.
- MARTIN:—Smith and Pocahontas: A Poem, by J. H. Martin. Richmond, 1862; pp. 135.
- MAXWELL:—Poems, by William Maxwell, Esq. Philadelphia, 1812; pp. 144.
- MICHARD:—Religio Poetae, A Trilogy, edited by J. Michard, Professor of Modern Languages. Richmond, 1860; pp. 119.
- MITCHELL:—Indecision, a Tale of the Far West; and Other Poems, by J. K. Mitchell. Philadelphia, 1839.

- Moomaw:—Songs in the Night, by Benjamin C. Moomaw. 1900; pp. 52.
- Morgan:—Song-Sermons and Other Poems, by James Brainerd Morgan. Richmond, 1892; pp. 109.
  - Strollings in Song-Land, by James Brainerd Morgan. 1893.
- Munford:—A Collection of Plays and Poems, by the late Col. Robert Munford, of Mecklenburg County, in the State of Virginia. Petersburg, 1798; pp. 206.
- Munford:—Poems and Compositions in Prose, by William Munford, Richmond, 1798; pp. 189.
  - Homers's Iliad, Translated by William Munford. In two Volumes. Boston, 1846.
- Newberry:—Eagle Oak and Other Poems, by Samuel Henderson Newberry, of Bland, Va. Richmond, 1906; pp. 426.
- PAGE, THOS. NELSON: See Gordon.
- PAINTER:—Lyrical Vignettes, by F. V. N. Painter. Boston, 1900; pp. 114.
- Parsons:—The Reaper and Other Poems, by H. C. Parsons. New York, 1884; pp. 61.
- Poe: -Poems, by Edgar Allen Poe (Various editions).
- PORTER:—The Lost Cause and Other Poems, by Duval Porter. First Edition. Danville, Va., 1897; pp. 96.
- Powers: —Uncle Isaac, or Old Days in the South, by William Dudley Powers. Richmond, 1899; pp. 245.
- Preston:—Beechenbrook: a Rhyme of the War, by Margaret J. Preston. Baltimore, 1865.
  - Cartoons, by Margaret J. Preston. Boston, 1875.
  - For Love's Sake,—Poems of Faith and Comfort, by Margaret J. Preston, New York, 1886.
  - Colonial Ballads, Sonnets, and Other Verses, by Margaret J. Preston. Boston, 1887.
- Quarles, James A.:—Via Dolorosa; or, the Travail of Christ's Soul, by Dunlora. Danville, Ky.; pp. 14.
- RANDOLPH:—Poems by Innes Randolph, compiled by his son from the Original Manuscript. Baltimore, 1898; pp. 76.
- RITSON:—A poetical Picture of America, being Observations made during a Residence of Several Years at Alexandria and Norfolk in Virginia; and Interspersed with Anecdotes, arising from a general Intercourse with Society in that Country, from the year 1799 to 1807, by A Lady. London, 1809; pp. 177.

- RIVES:—Herod and Mariamne: a Tragedy, by Amelie Rives. Philadelphia. Poems in Magazines.
- Robertson:—Virginia; or, The Fatal Patent,—A Metrical Romance in Three Cantos, by John Robertson. Washington, 1825; pp. 68.
  Riego or, the Spanish Martyr,—A Tragedy in Five Acts, by John Robertson. Richmond, 1850; pp. 106.

Opuscula, Seria ac Jocosa,—Found in the Scrutoire of an ultra Octogenarian,—Written during Intervals of relaxation from the Duties of a Busy Life, by John Robertson. 1871; pp. 40.

- Rose:—The Poetry of Locofocoism; or, Modern Democracy and Cassism Unmasked.—A Poetical and Personal Poem containing 275 Stanzas, by E. M. P. Rose. Wellsburgh, Va., 1848; pp. 48.
- Ryan:—Poems: Patriotic, Religious, Miscellaneous, by Abram J. Ryan. Baltimore, 1881; pp. 348.
- Salyards:—Idothea; or, the Divine Image,—A Poem, by Joseph Salyards. New Market, 1874; pp. 308.
- Sandys:—Ovid's Metamorphoses Englished by G. S.,—Imprinted at London MDCXXVI. Cum privilegio. London. Printed by William Stansby.
- Selden, —Poems, by Samuel Selden, M. D., of Norfolk, Va. Norfolk, 1880; pp. 77.
- SEMMES, THOMAS J.:—Poems, by A Collegian. Charlottesville, 1833; pp. 95.
- SHEFFEY: —The Spirit-Mother and Other Poems, by Miriam Sheffey. New York, 1905; pp. 62.
- SLEDD:—From Cliff and Scaur, by Benjamin Sledd. New York, 1897; pp. 100.
  - The Watchers of the Hearth, by Benjamin Sledd. Boston, 1902; pp. 84.
- SMILEY, MATILDA:—Poems, by Matilda. Richmond, 1851; pp. 311. SMITH:—Up to the Light, with Other Religious and Devotional Poems, by Sara Henderson Smith. New York, 1884; pp. 108.
- Speece:—My Native Land and Other Poems, by Frederick Speece. Philadelphia, 1832; pp. 156.
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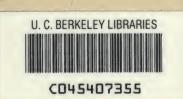
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